Famous Artists Painting Course

Famous Artists Schools, Inc., Westport, Connecticut

Section **17**

Animal drawing

Guiding Faculty

Ben Shahn

Joseph Hirsch

Doris Lee

Dong Kingman

Arnold Blanch

Adolf Dehn

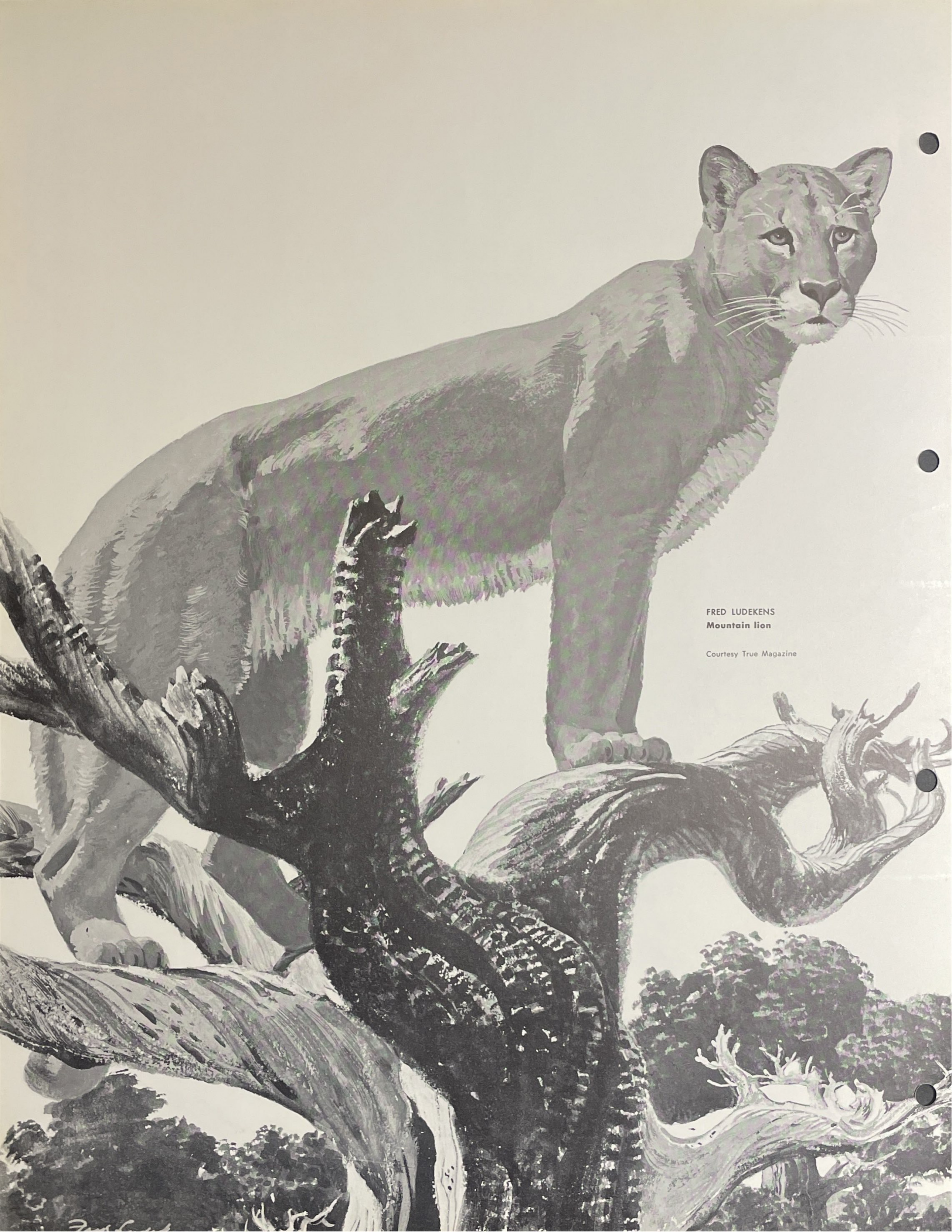
Fletcher Martin

Will Barnet

Julian Levi

Syd Solomon

Copyright © 1965, Famous Artists Painting Course, Inc.
Printed in U.S.A.



FRED LUDEKENS
Mountain lion

Courtesy True Magazine

Animal drawing — the animal in action

When you take up your pen or pencil to draw an animal you join an ancient and a great fraternity of artists. The oldest drawings on earth — drawings that are older than history itself — are pictures of animals. They were painted on the walls of caves in Europe by the artists of the Stone Age. Working with colors they made from minerals, with blacks made from burnt bones, these first artists painted bison and antelope, boars, and horses with a vigorous realism, economy of line, and freshness of style that are the envy of many of today's artists. The beasts themselves vanished from the face of the earth thousands of years ago, but they still live on in the caves because of the skill with which they were painted.

Animals have always had a special meaning for people. Since the day of the cave man, the animal has never ceased to be a leading subject in art, in every country and century. Animals have been the symbols of savage tribes and feudal lords, of kings and nations. They have been used as symbols of war and peace, crusades and famine, stubbornness, devotion, and wisdom. They have decorated vases, walls, armor, clothing, jewelry, flags, coins, and cigarettes.

It is said that the artists of the caves had a magical or religious purpose in painting animals: once the animal was captured or killed in a picture, it would in turn be captured or killed in real life, to supply the cave dwellers with meat and fur. Even today, the ability to capture animals in pictures — that is, draw them well — means food and security. Whether in the world of magazine and book illustration or in fine arts painting, animals are a perennially popular subject. In business there is a constant demand for drawings of animals in advertisements, booklets, posters, package design, trademarks, and in every other kind of visual communication.

For the man or woman who can draw and paint animals with skill, opportunities are particularly good because so many of today's artists, although competent in every other area, have never learned how to draw animals, and avoid jobs which call for them. Yet the subject is no more difficult than any other if you approach it with patience and a willingness to learn. There is a joy and a sense of achievement in drawing an eagle so that it really seems to be in flight — in portraying a massive buffalo pawing the ground or charging across the prairie — or a dog wagging his tail and gazing up at his master with expectant eyes.

Animals are exciting to draw — and it pays to know how to draw them.

Cave drawings

Indian pottery

Illustration

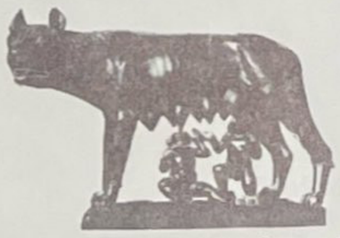
Phonographs

Airline

Medieval armor

Greek sculpture

Costumes



Legendary

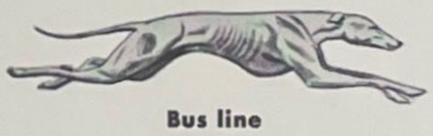
Dairy products

Royal standard

National seal

State flag

Insurance



Bus line

Whiskey

Cigarettes

Oil

National emblem

The animal has been an important symbol in religion, history, art, and business since ancient times.

Man and beast — different yet alike

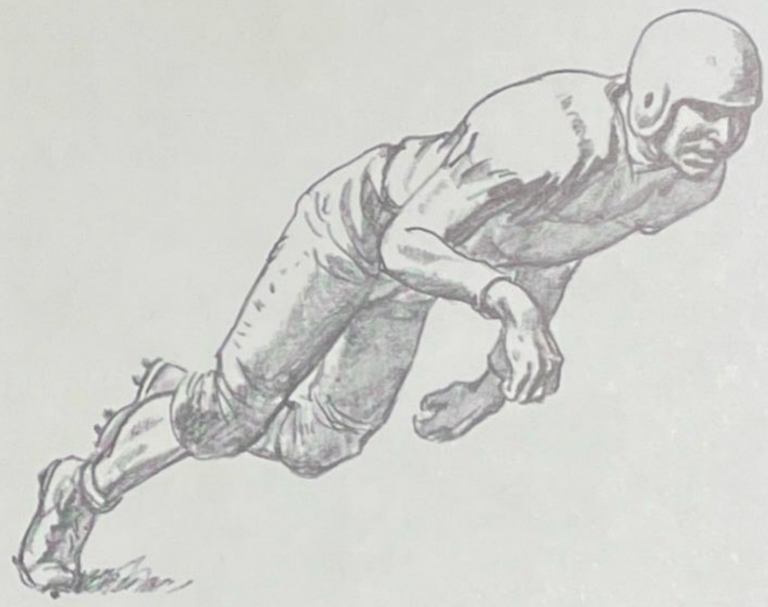
Courtesy True Magazine

The bear stands and moves very much like a man. Notice here the forward thrust of the head and the action of the "arms."

In outward appearance man seems profoundly different from the animal, but when we begin to compare them carefully we see they have much in common. In structure and movement, in behavior and feeling, the human being continually reminds us of the animal. This resemblance is ingrained in our language. Phrases such as "he roared like a lion," "cried like a whipped dog," "sprang like a tiger," or "climbed like a monkey" suggest some of the basic similarities.

The resemblance between man and the animals can be a great help to you in drawing and painting animal subjects. Having studied human anatomy and the figure in motion, you already possess much of the knowledge you need to draw animals. Even what you have learned about expressing the human emotions will help you in drawing those of the animals. By trying to feel the same emotion you want to portray, you will have a good idea of what muscles should be tense and what body movements to show in your pictures.

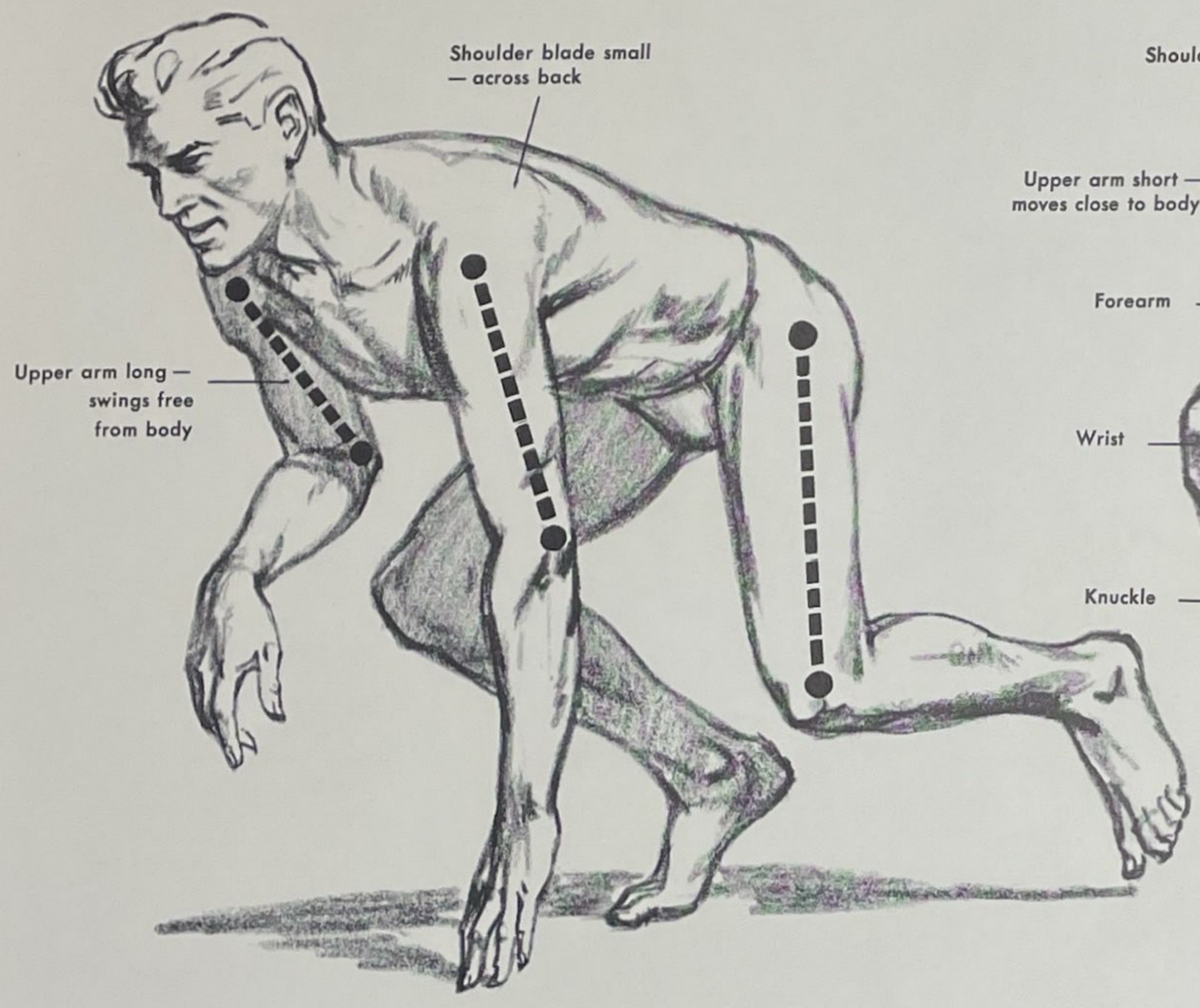
© The Curtis Publishing Co.

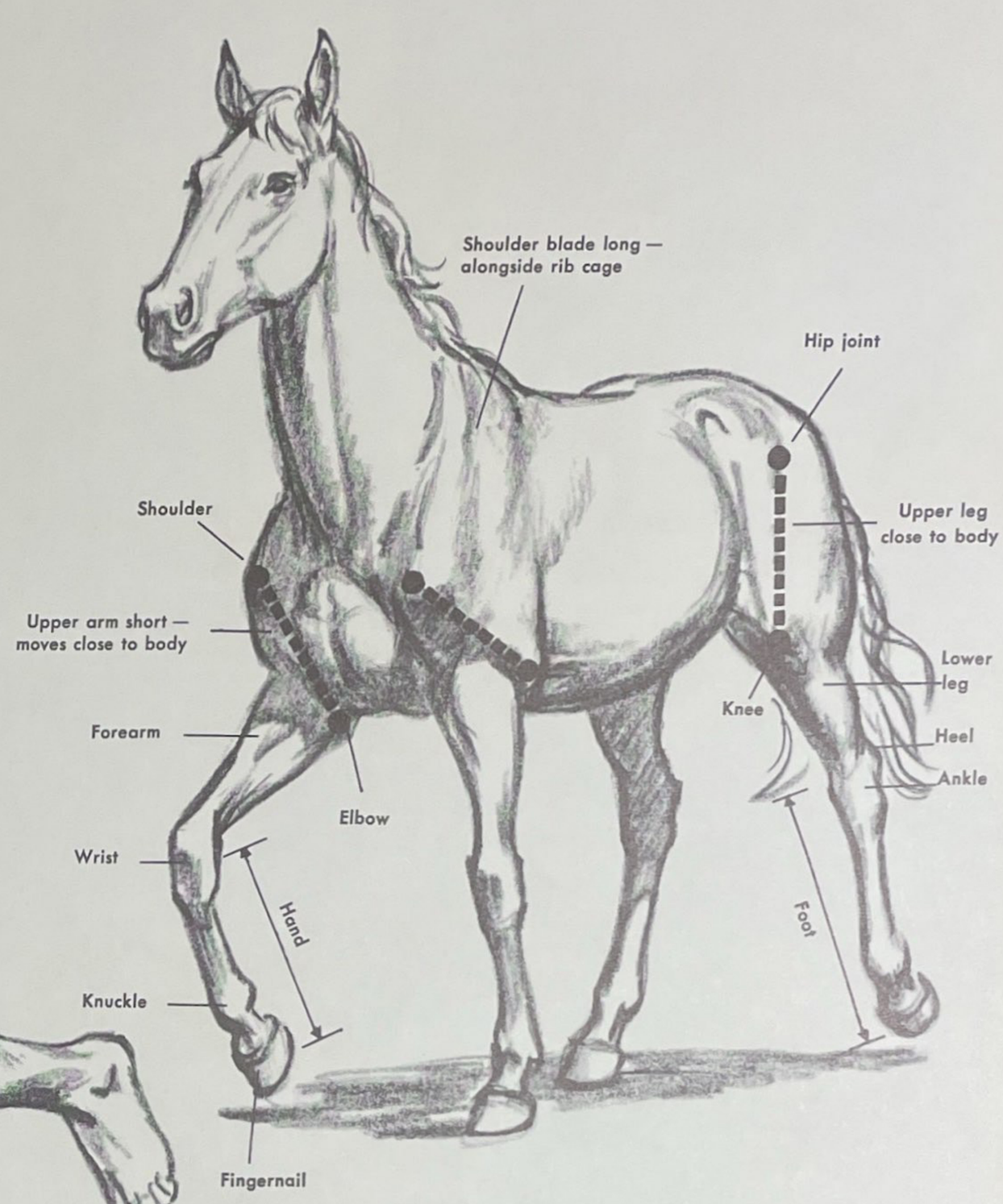


In these pictures of the charging lion and the football player you can see not only similarities of action, but actually a suggestion of the same muscles in operation. Observe how similar the lion's front limb and joint are to the arm and wrist of the man.

Puma and man also have much in common. Notice particularly the shoulder area and the bone and muscle structure showing in the limbs of both.

The first step: we compare basic structures





Bone for bone and muscle for muscle, man and the animals are very much alike. To make the points of resemblance easy to see, we have drawn the man in the same pose as a typical animal, the horse. For comparison with human anatomy, throughout this section we use terms like "forearm," "wrist," "ankle," etc., rather than terms of animal anatomy.

Our first step in learning to draw animals is to see how they compare with man in physical structure. The parallels are astonishing, as these drawings show.

Most animals, of course, stand on all fours. In spite of this difference, their bone structure is much like man's. Like him they have a skull, backbone, pelvic bone, and legs. Their front legs correspond to his arms. All of this is easy to see.

Even the muscles throughout the animal's body resemble those of the human figure. Look at the drawings above and notice how closely the muscles in man and the horse correspond in the chest, shoulder, back, arms, and legs.

The resemblances in such areas as the upper arms and upper legs are harder to find. This is because these parts are free from the body shape in man, but not in most animals. The animals have their upper limbs encased in muscles that hold them so close to the body that their actual position is hard to make out. The dotted lines in the diagrams will help you see where they are, and so will the skeleton diagrams on the next page.

To make another comparison clearer, we show the man balanced on his fingers and toes. This is actually the way most animals stand. Look at the joint labeled "wrist" on the front leg of the horse. The portion from this joint to the hoof corresponds to the human hand and fingers. The bones in this area are fused together and the hoof is actually a large "fingernail."

We find a similar situation in the rear leg, where the section from the "ankle" to the hoof corresponds to the human foot. This is shown in detail with various animals on page 7. As you can see, most animals actually stand on their toes.

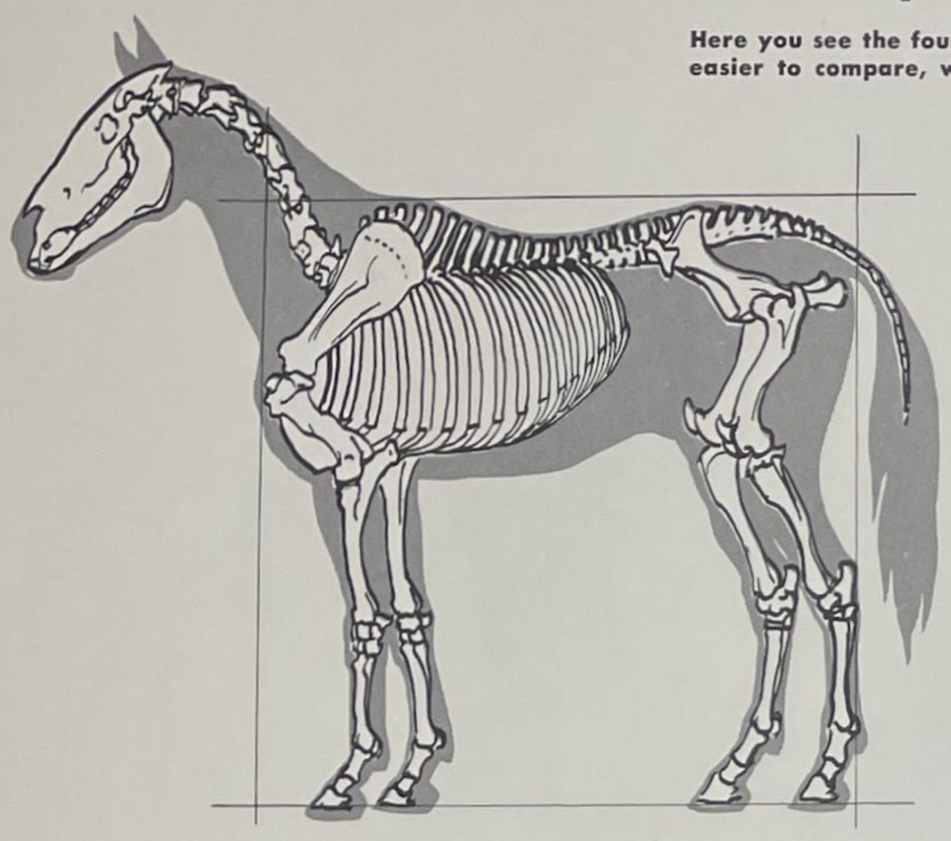
On the following pages we are going to take a close look at four animals — the horse, dog, cat, and cow — and see how they compare in basic structure with the human figure. We use these animals because each is representative of many similar types. For example, with slight differences in proportions and size, a cat is similar to a tiger, lion, puma, leopard, jaguar, or bobcat. Such animals as the zebra, deer, and giraffe are built much like the horse. The dog, wolf, and fox are also alike, and so are the cow, bison, and water buffalo.

These comparisons will prove extremely useful to you. By learning a few basic animal types, you will gain an understanding of structure and movement that you can apply in drawing virtually any animal, as we show you later.

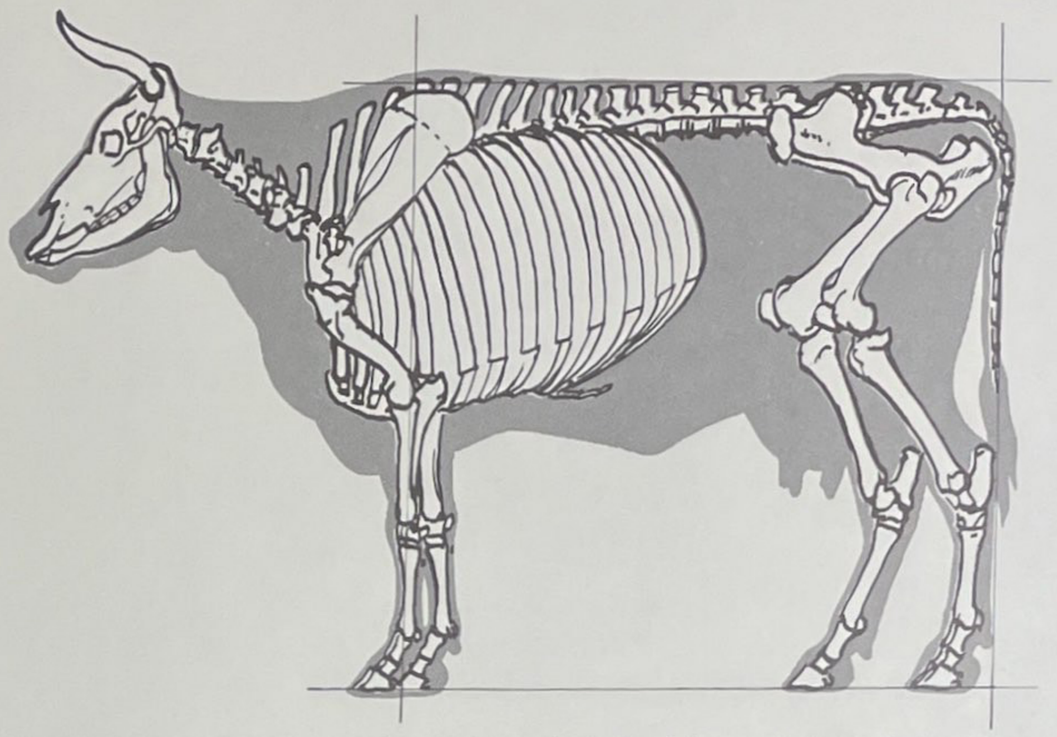
After you have studied this section you will be able to observe and understand animals much better, whether you are sketching them from life or from photos. You will not have to find the exact position to copy, but will be able to visualize and construct animals in different positions.

The second step: we compare proportions

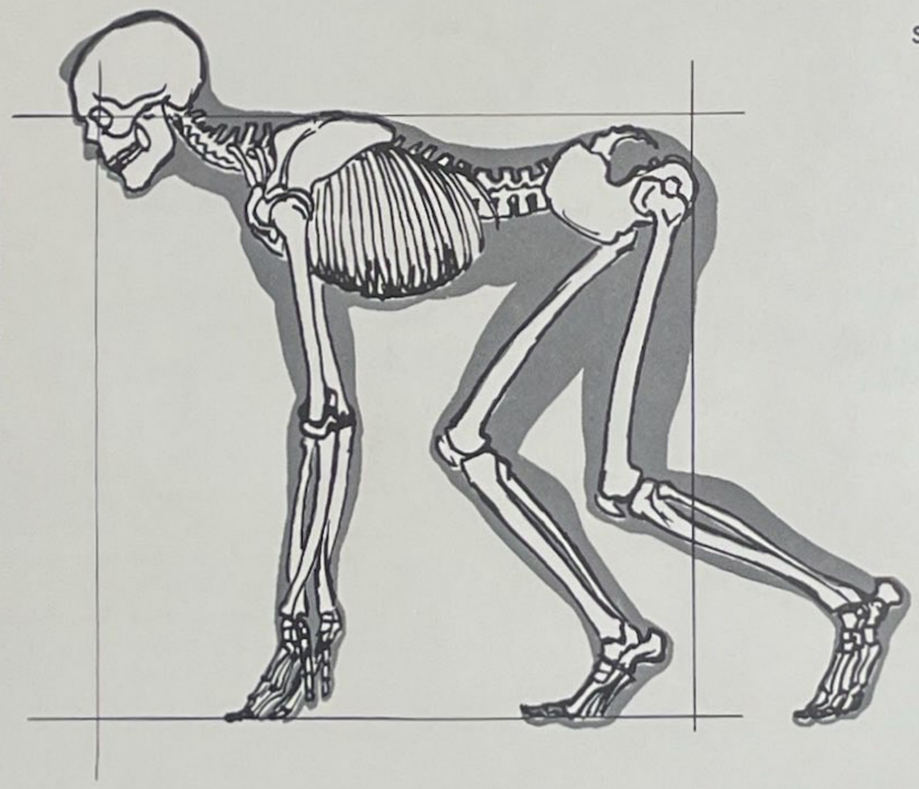
Here you see the four basic animals and man. To make them easier to compare, we show them within identical squares.



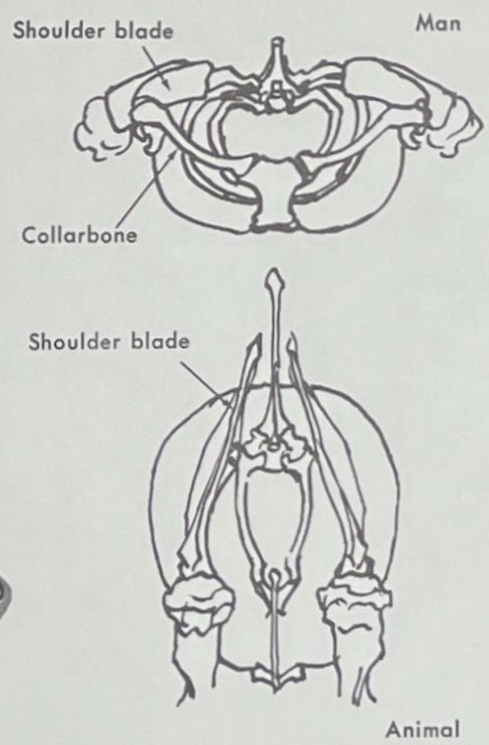
Horse: The body of the average horse fits nicely inside a square, with the head, neck, and tail projecting beyond. Compare the bones with those of the man and the other animals here. Note the difference in the size and shape of the rib cage and the curve of the backbone.



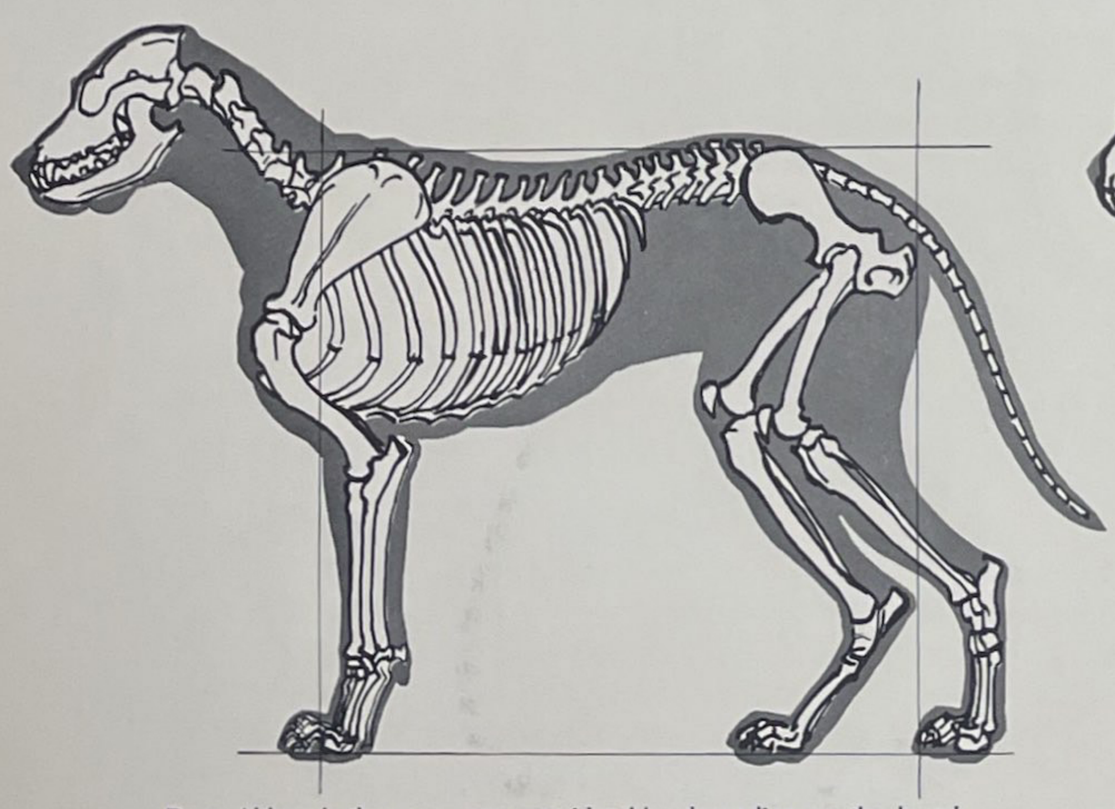
Cow: Compared to the horse, the body of the cow is longer in proportion to its legs, and its backbone is quite straight. Notice how the front of the cow's body projects outside the square. The bones, however, are basically the same as in the other animals.



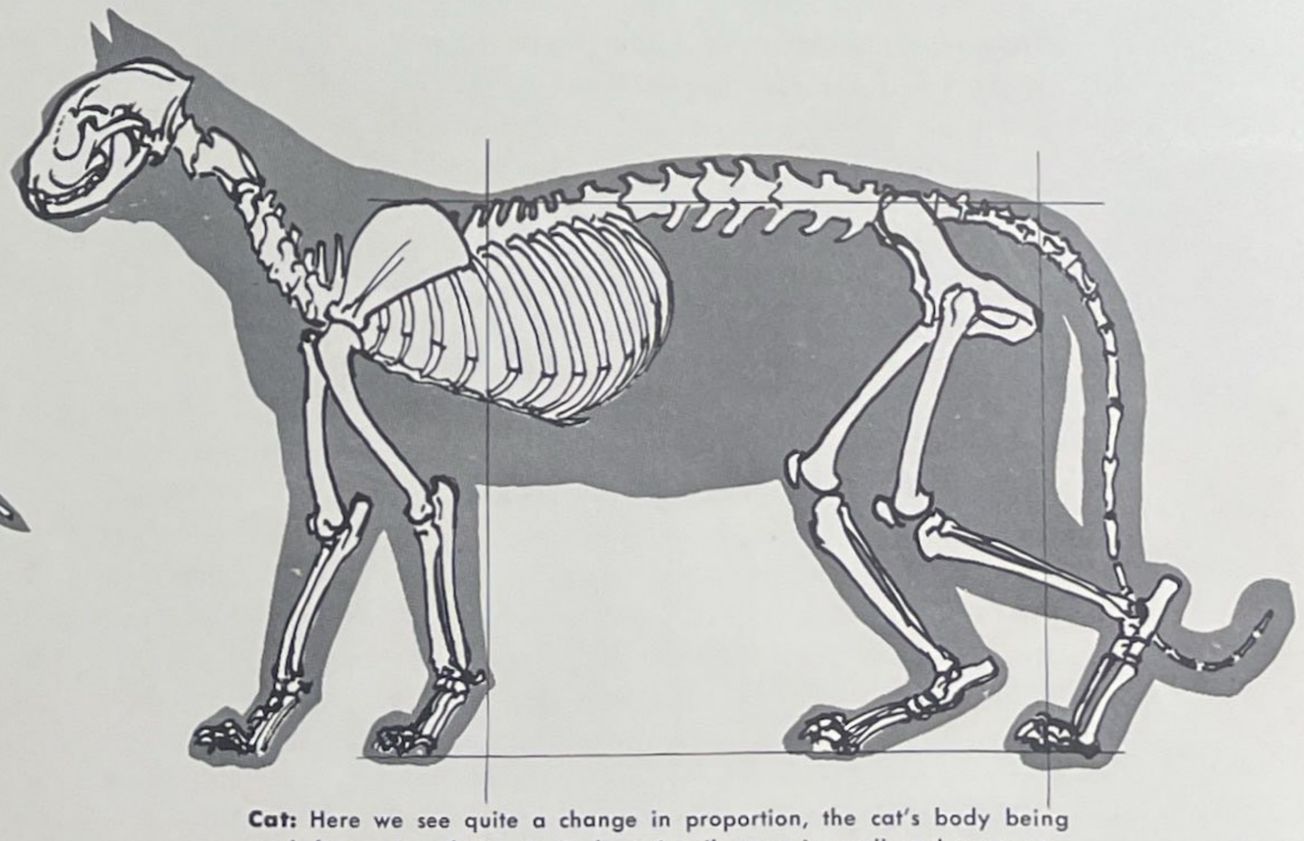
Man: The human body is much shorter in proportion to its arms and legs. Compare the bones with those of the four animals shown here — the main differences are in the arms, legs, and shoulder blades. Most animals actually stand "on their toes" just like the man here.



Here you see the difference between the shoulder region of a man and an animal. A man's rib cage is wide from side to side, and his shoulder blades normally are across the back of the rib cage. These connect at the shoulder with the curved collarbones, which reach around to the breastbone in front. The typical animal has no collarbone. Its rib cage is narrow from side to side, and its shoulder blades are placed along the sides of the upper rib cage.



Dog: Although they may vary considerably, depending on the breed, the proportions of the average dog are quite similar to those of the horse. The back legs are normally bent a bit more and the upper bones of the legs are relatively longer than in the horse.



Cat: Here we see quite a change in proportion, the cat's body being much longer in relation to its legs. Its rib cage is small and tapers toward the front; its backbone is long and flexible. Note the typical "crouched" position of the back legs.

Variety in heads and feet

The horse's face is generally straight.

Cows tend to have a "dished" face.

Most dogs have a decided break in the line of the face.

The "step-down" in a cat's face is more gradual.

Head shapes

One of the easiest ways to understand the character of different types of animals is to view their heads as simple profiles. The heavy black line next to each drawing emphasizes this profile or characteristic shape of the head. By learning these basic shapes you can train your eye to see subtle differences between species of animals – and even the very slight differences that exist among animals of the same species. Some horses, for instance, have very straight faces, others slightly "dished" faces, while still others have a "Roman nose" that curves downward slightly. In general, however, their faces are straight compared to those of cow, dog, cat, etc.

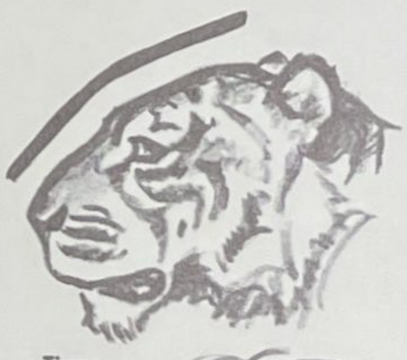
Within the dog and cat families there is also great variety, but the general shape of the face differs still more strongly from that of other animals. Being aware of the similarities – and the differences – is one of the keys to making a convincing drawing.

DOG FAMILY

Greyhound

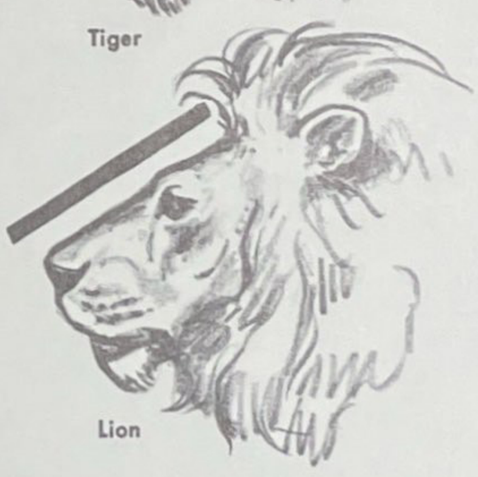
Puma

Bulldog



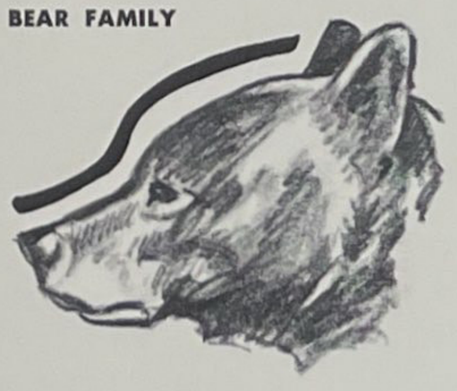
Tiger

Scottie



Lion

BEAR FAMILY

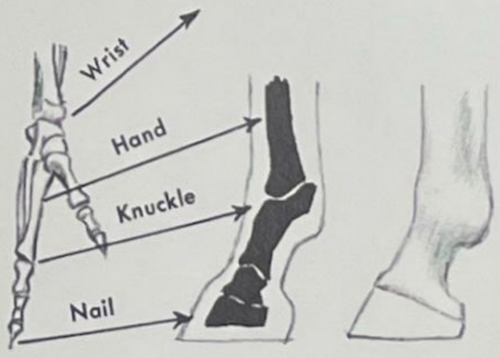


Black bear

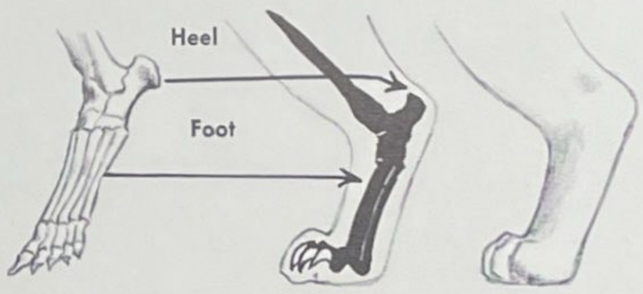
Polar bear

How animal feet compare with human hands and feet

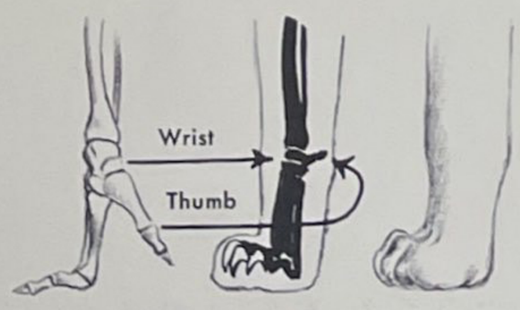
On the opposite page you saw the leg structures of various animals and how they compare with the arms and legs of a man. Here you see the feet analyzed in greater detail. Notice that almost all the animals stand on their toes and "fingers." The bear is one of the few exceptions.



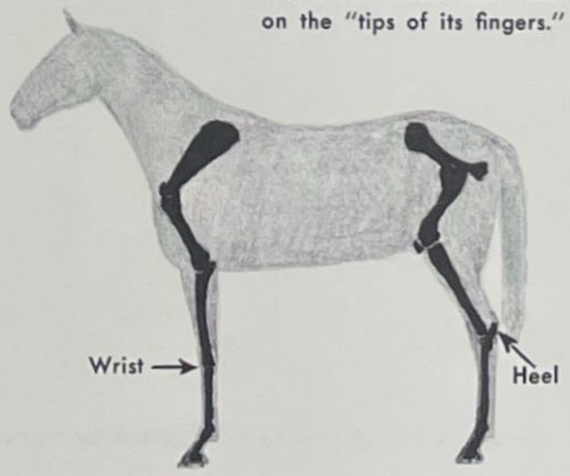
The human hand compared to the front foot of the horse. Note that the horse walks on the "tips of its fingers."



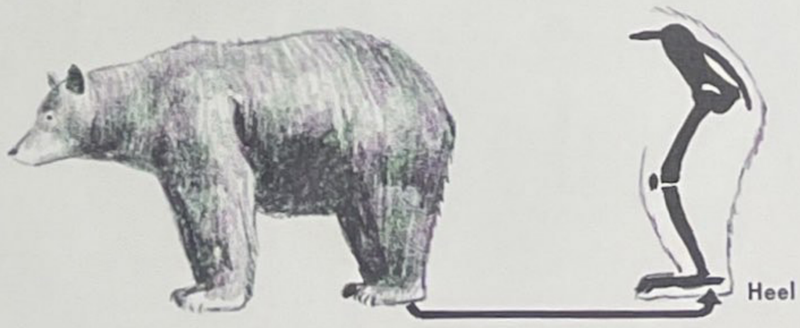
The human foot compared to the back leg of a cat. The cat, dog, etc., walk on the toes with the "heel" raised.



The hand compared to the cat's front foot. Cat, dog, etc., walk on the "knuckle."

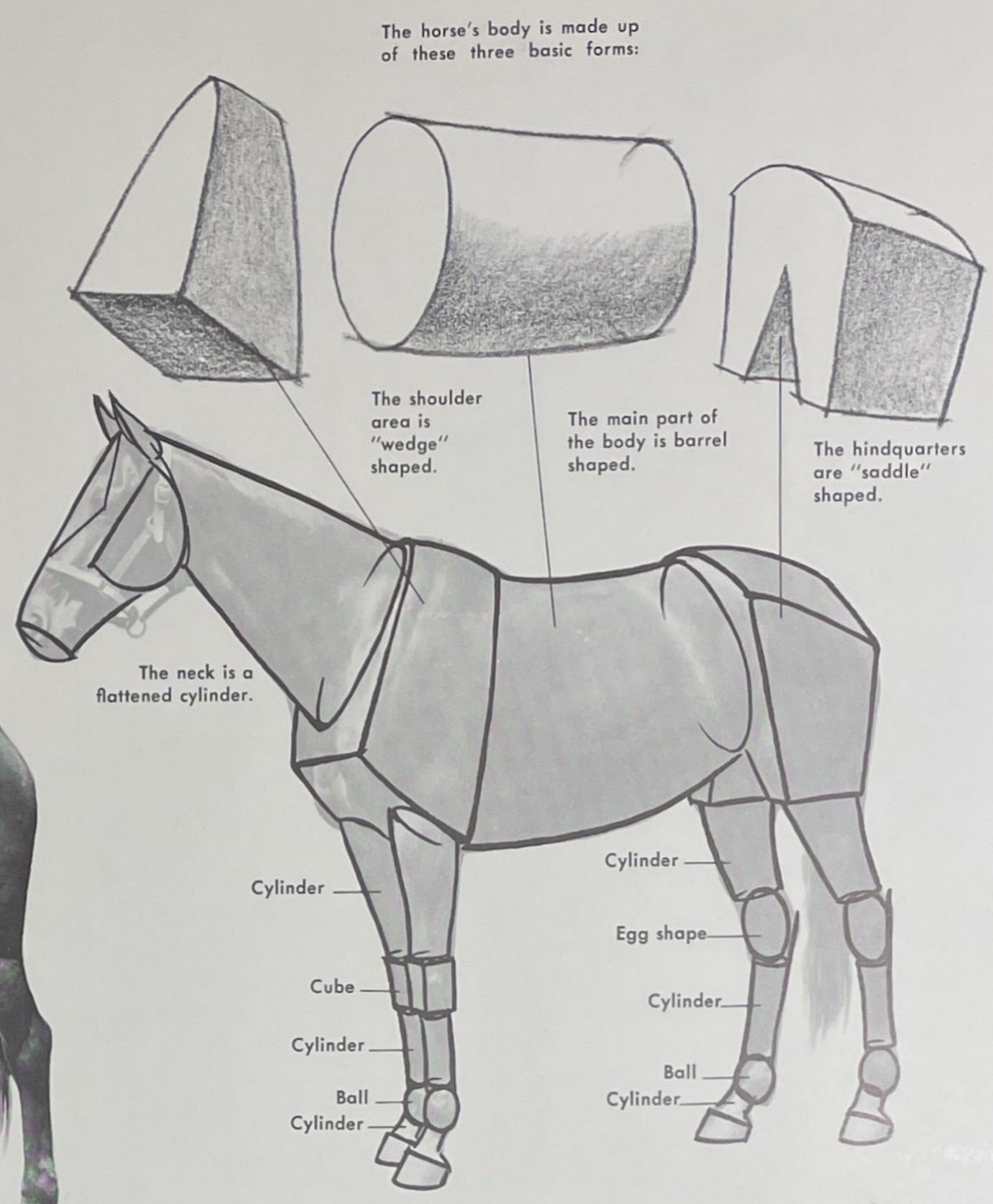


The horse, like most other animals, has its heel and wrist well up on the leg.



The bear walks and stands with its "heel" on the ground.

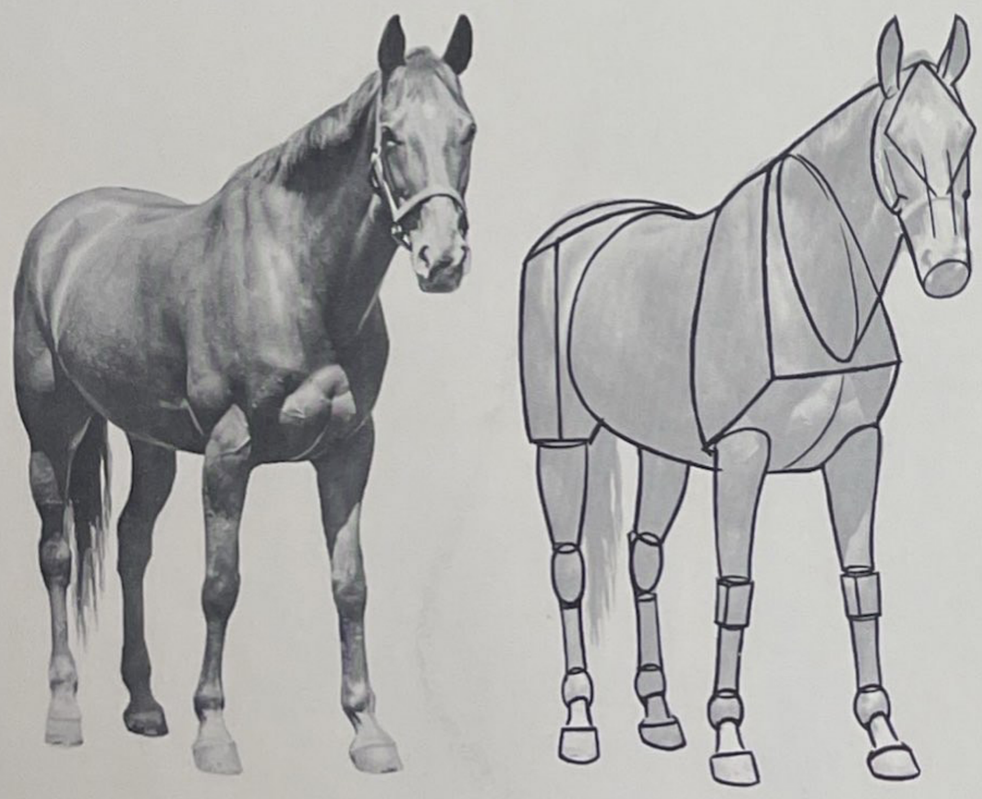
The horse



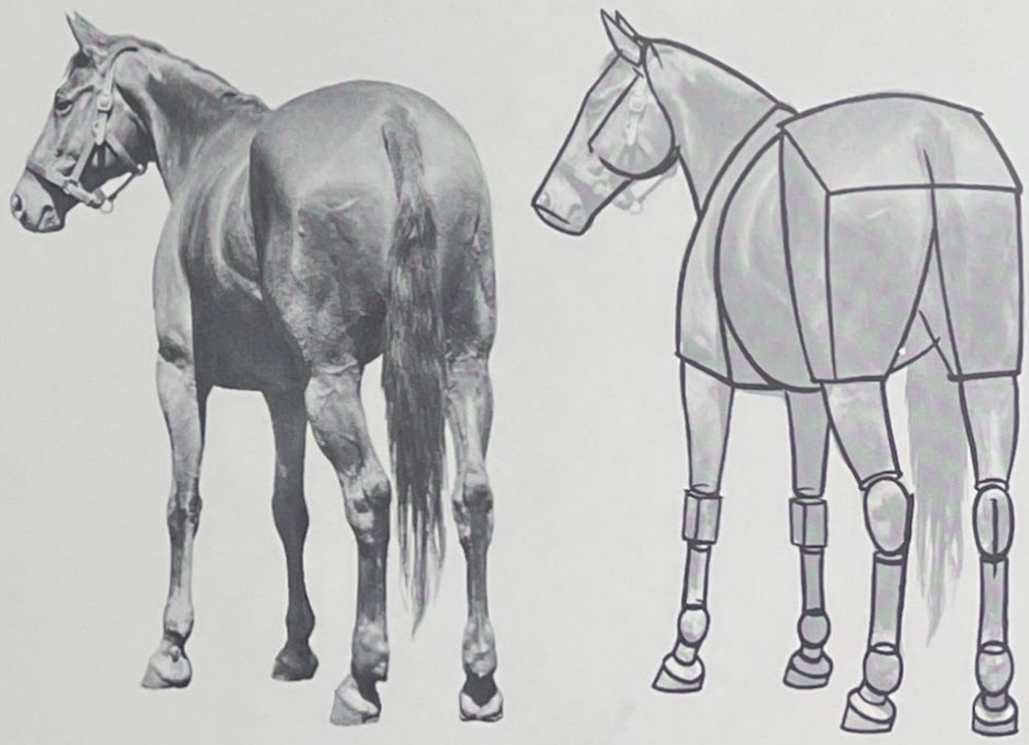
We can reduce the horse to a few simple, basic forms just as we did the human figure. By learning to use these basic forms, you will be able to draw a horse in any position. As you study these pages, review also pages 5, 6, and 7 to see how the inner structure of bone and muscle determines the shapes you see on the surface. It will also help to look at page 12. There is no need to draw the skeleton and all the muscles, but you should study them and keep in mind how their movement beneath the surface causes the bulges and hollows you actually see.

Study these diagrams carefully and learn to draw these basic forms from all angles. Remember to draw through so that they fit together properly.

You will remember that in the sections on the figure you first learned to draw an "average" man. In drawing the horse you will do the same thing. First learn to draw the average horse. Then you can make the changes in proportion that are necessary to depict various types, such as the show horse or work horse, the race horse or the Shetland pony.

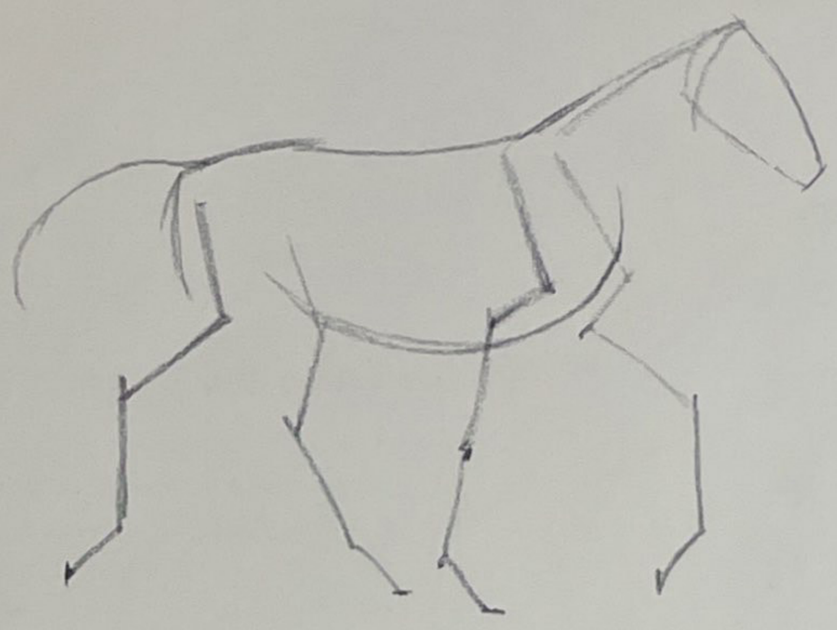


Viewed from the front, the "wedge" form of the shoulder blade slopes down and out, creating a rather triangular shape.

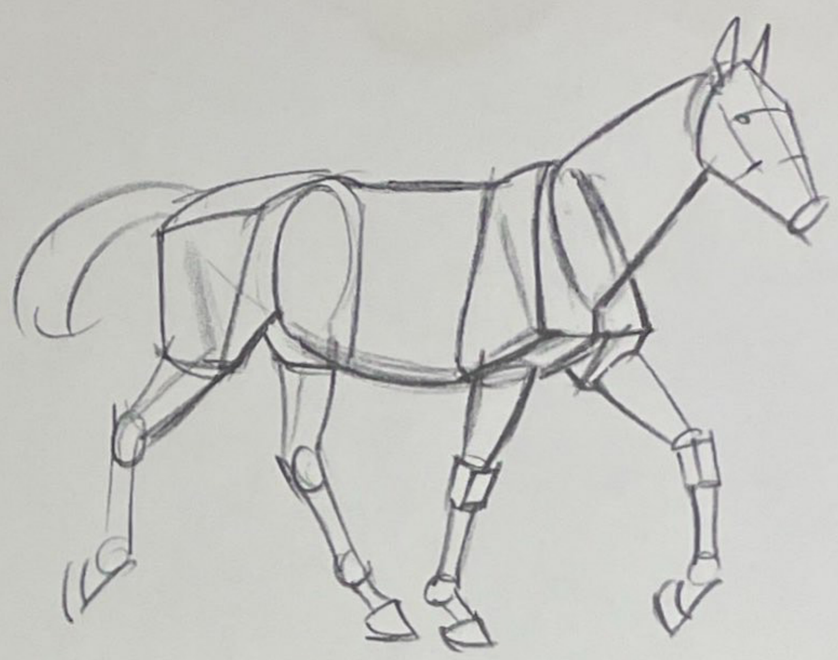


Viewed from the rear, the "saddle" shape of the hindquarters is somewhat squarish, and about the same width at top and bottom.

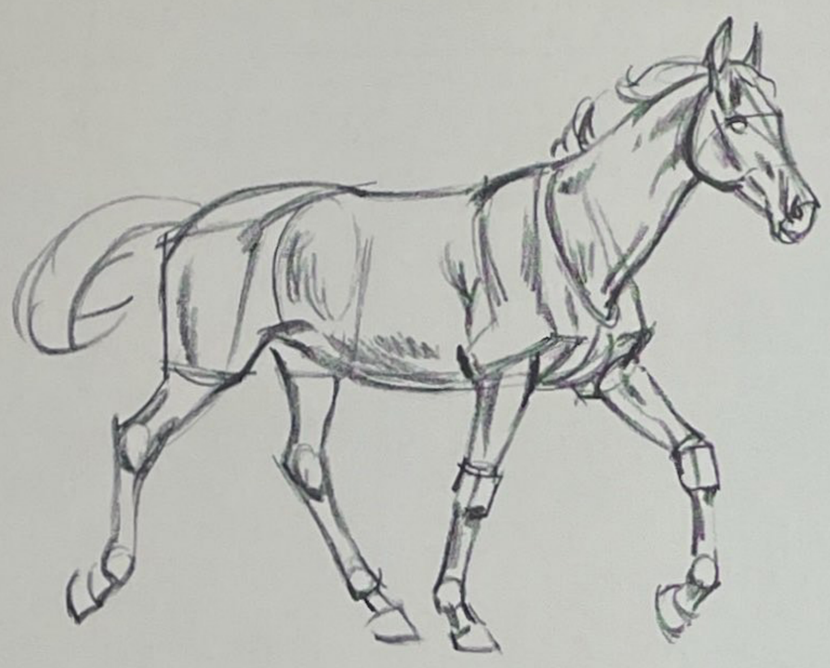
How to draw the horse



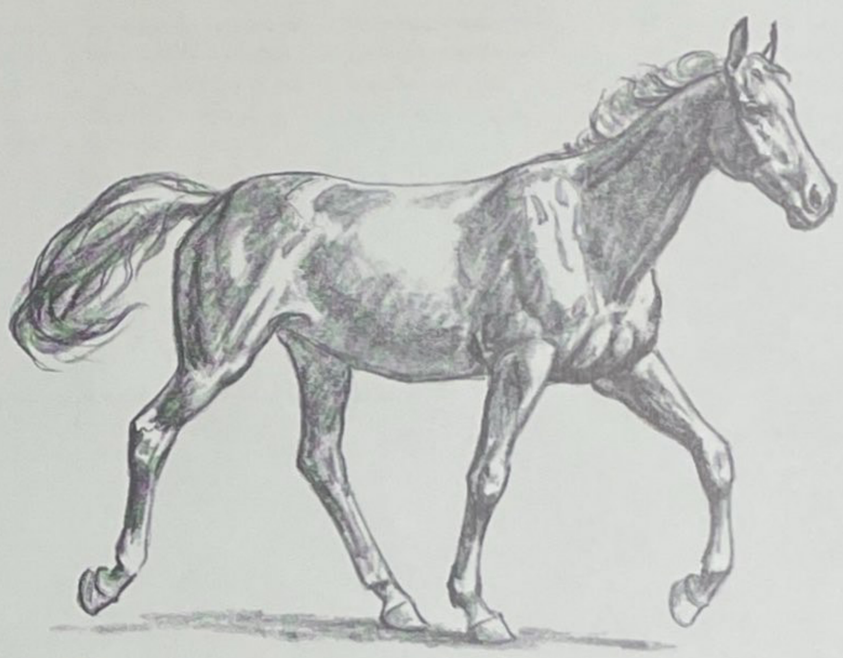
1 Sketch lightly a line running along the top of the neck and body, and indicate the bottom of the barrel-shaped body. Then, keeping the skeleton structure in mind, indicate the position of the legs and shoulder blades, and the long tapering head.



2 Using the basic shapes shown on the opposite page, start building solid forms. Draw through to make them fit together properly. Use the proportional checks shown on page 11 to be sure that the parts of the body are the right size in relation to each other.

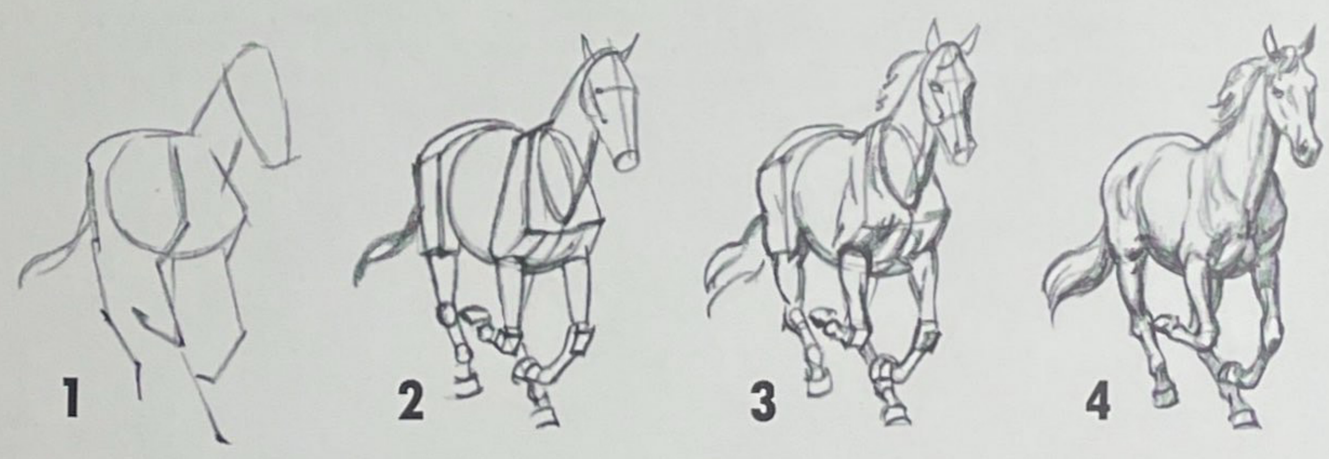


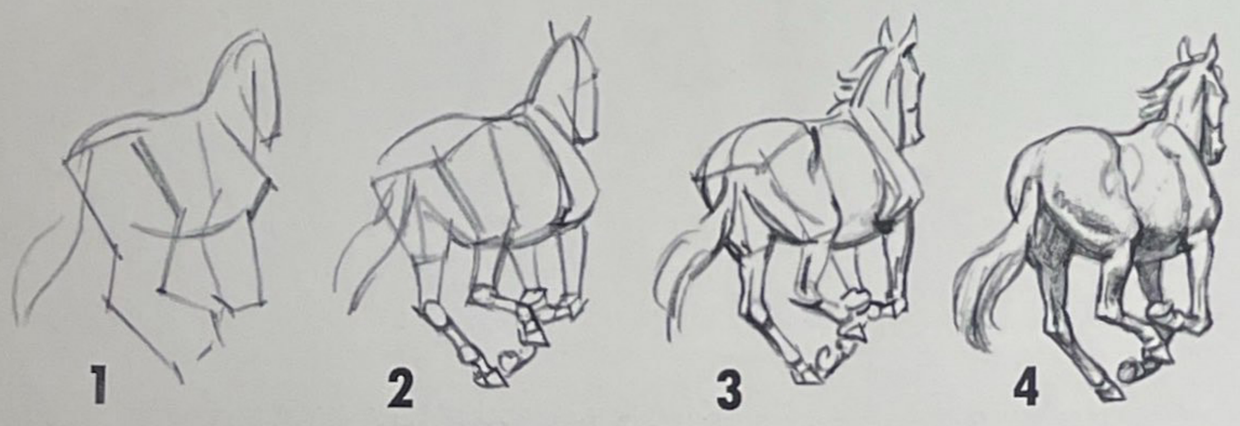
3 When you have finished blocking in the "basic form" horse, start indicating the realistic shapes caused by the muscles and bones. (See muscle diagram on page 12.) As you do this, emphasize the rhythmic flow of action throughout the body. Draw the head as shown on page 10.



4 Finish by erasing unwanted construction lines and putting in modeling. As you model, think of the bones and muscles beneath. Notice particularly the places where the bone is near the surface, such as the shoulder and the leg joints.

In sketching the front and rear views of the running horse, it is important to draw through carefully to solve the problems of overlapping forms and foreshortened parts of the body, legs, and neck. Just as in the demonstration above, you should first establish the general position and action and then draw the forms.



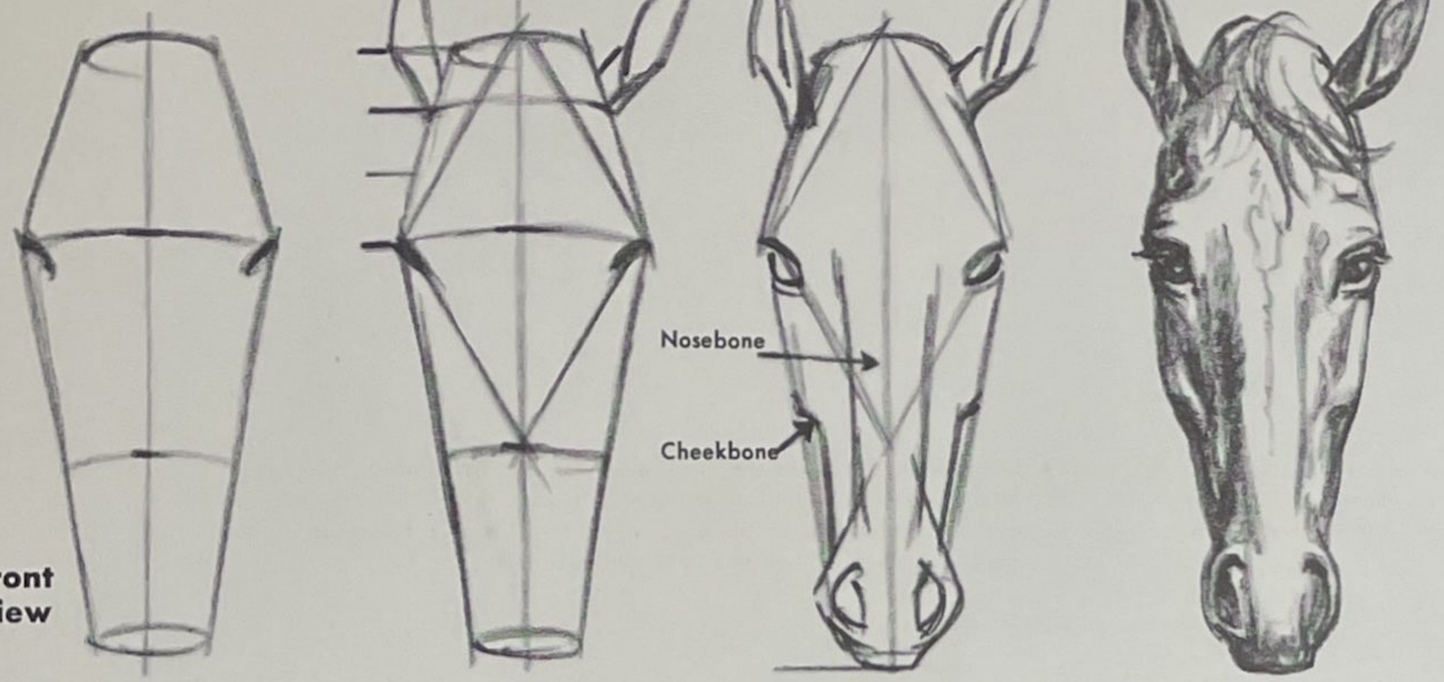


In these pages we give you a logical method of drawing animals. Nothing, however, can take the place of careful observation on your own part. Draw from living animals whenever possible. Build up a good collection of photos or pictures you clip from magazines to use as reference. Study the action of the animals you see on your TV screen and make rapid sketches of them.

Drawing the horse's head

The simplest way to draw the horse's head is as a long cylinder shape, tapering at both ends. It is widest at the eyes and gets narrower at both top and bottom. The measurements here will help you block in the forms and locate the features. Naturally, the exact shapes and proportions will vary somewhat with different horses just as they do with people.

Front view



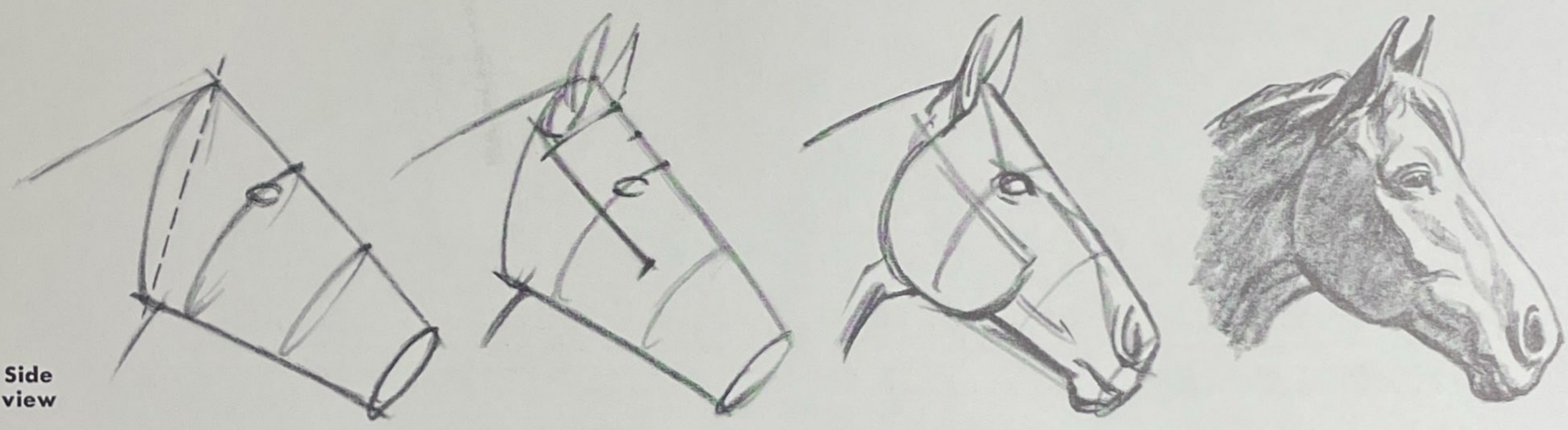
Sketch the tapering cylinder and divide it in thirds. Add the center line and place the eyes one-third down from the top. The width here is about one-third the length.

Sketch a diamond shape in the upper two-thirds to help establish the planes of the forehead. Locate the ears one-third of the way from top of head to eyes.

Indicate the nosebone and sketch in the nostrils. About halfway from the ear to the lip, locate the corners of the cheekbones. Narrow the head from here to the nostrils.

Add shading to show the side planes of the nose and indicate the bony structure over the eyes. Be sure to show the thickness of the eyelids, ears, and nostrils.

Side view



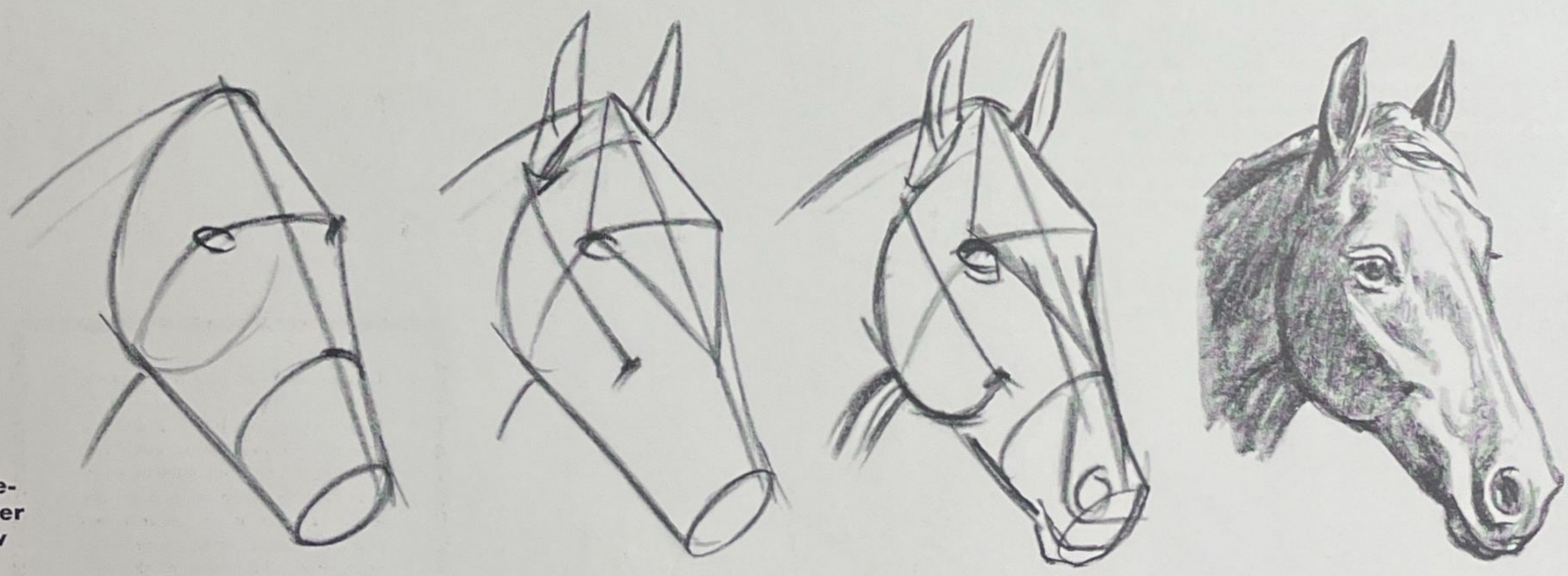
Sketch a long tapering cylinder with the top end cut off at the angle indicated. Divide the length in thirds, locating the eye as shown. The angle formed by the top line of the neck and face is just a little wider than a right angle.

Sketch a line indicating the cheekbone below the eye as shown. Extend this line back to locate the bottom of the ear. The front of the ear joins the head one-third down from the top of the head to the eye.

Sketch the curved disc shape of the cheek and jaw as shown. Divide the muzzle end of the head in thirds and sketch the nostril in the upper third and the lower lip and chin in the bottom third. Note how the head is narrowed just behind the chin.

Details of eyes, nostrils, and mouth are added. Use modeling to bring out the bone structure over the eye and the cheekbone beneath it. Notice the figure "6" shape of the nostril, and how the neck line curves under the jawbone.

Three-quarter view



Sketch a tapering cylinder. Indicate the center line running from top to bottom. Mark it off in thirds and draw through to locate the eyes. (Only the lashes of the far eye will show.)

Sketch the diamond-shaped forehead and locate the ears. Note that the angle between the top of the neck and the center line of the face is sharper in this view — just how sharp depends on how far the head is turned.

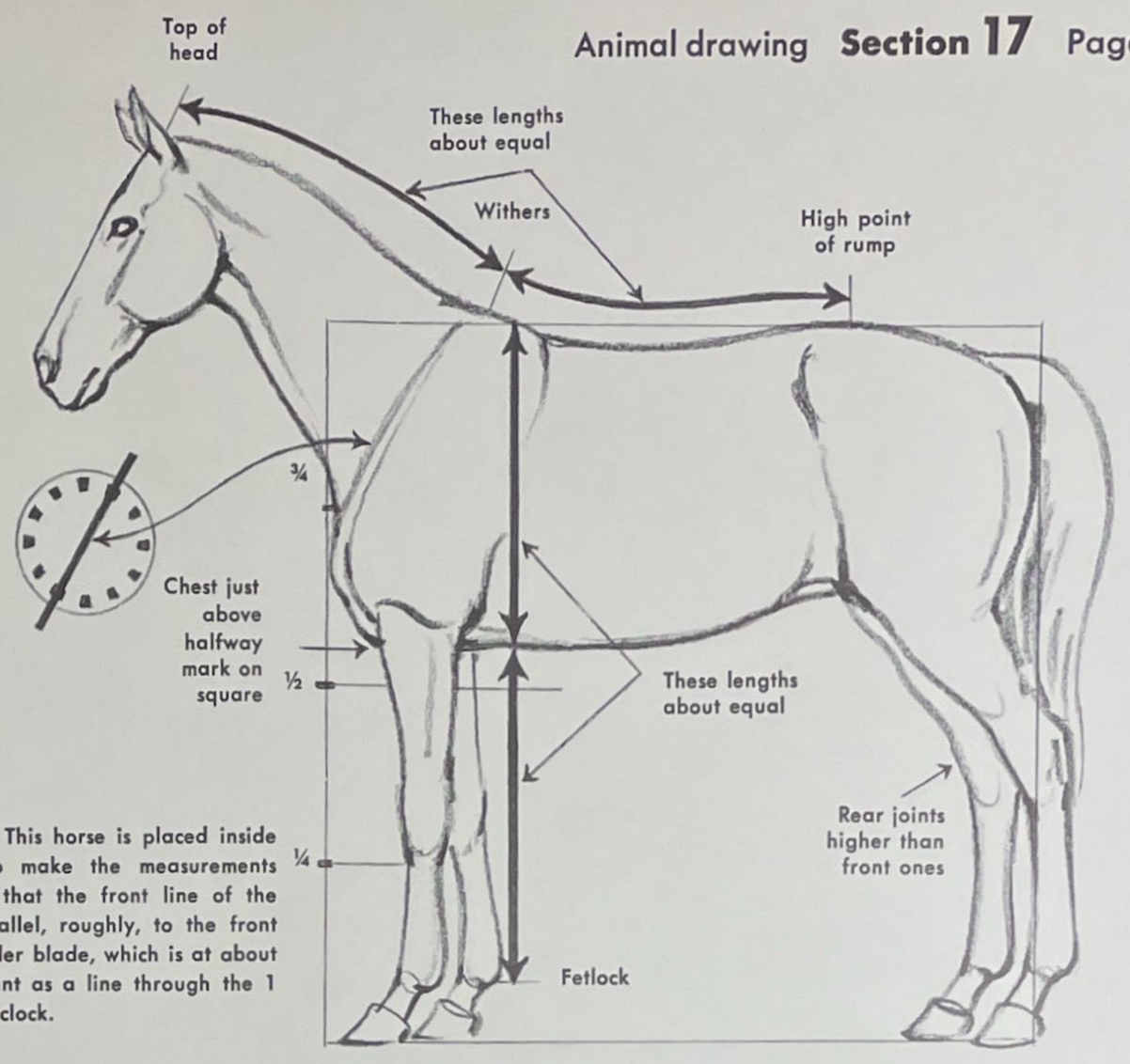
The nosebone is indicated, the nostrils and mouth are placed in the lower third of the face as shown. The disc shape of the cheek and jaw is sketched in.

Use shading to make the forms seem more solid and real. Be sure to suggest the cheekbone and the bones above the eyes. A well-placed high light will make the eye look moist and alive.

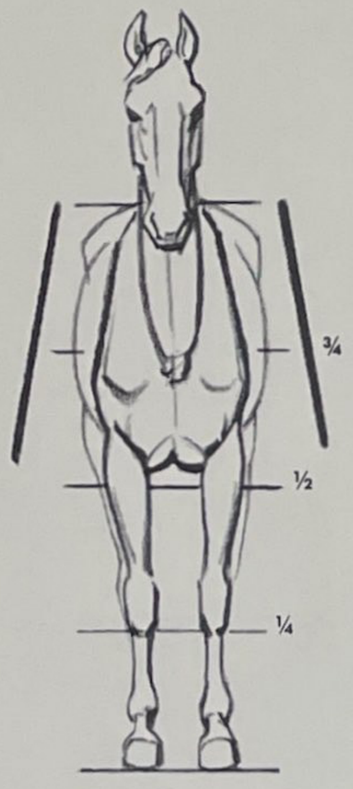
The proportions of the horse

In drawing the horse, just as in drawing the human figure, it is helpful to have a few standard measuring points to check from. Here we give you the basic measurements for an "average" horse. Most of the horses in your drawings and paintings will have proportions like this. You can easily make the necessary changes for other horses such as the heavily proportioned draft horse or the Arabian, which has a shorter backbone.

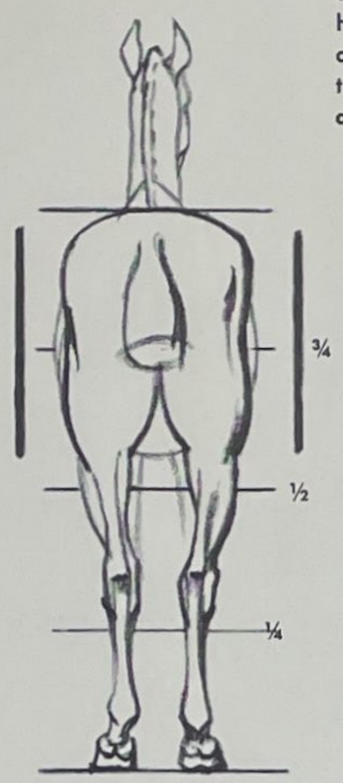
Naturally, when the horse is turned to other positions or is in action, you will have to estimate the measurements and the foreshortening just as you do with the human figure.



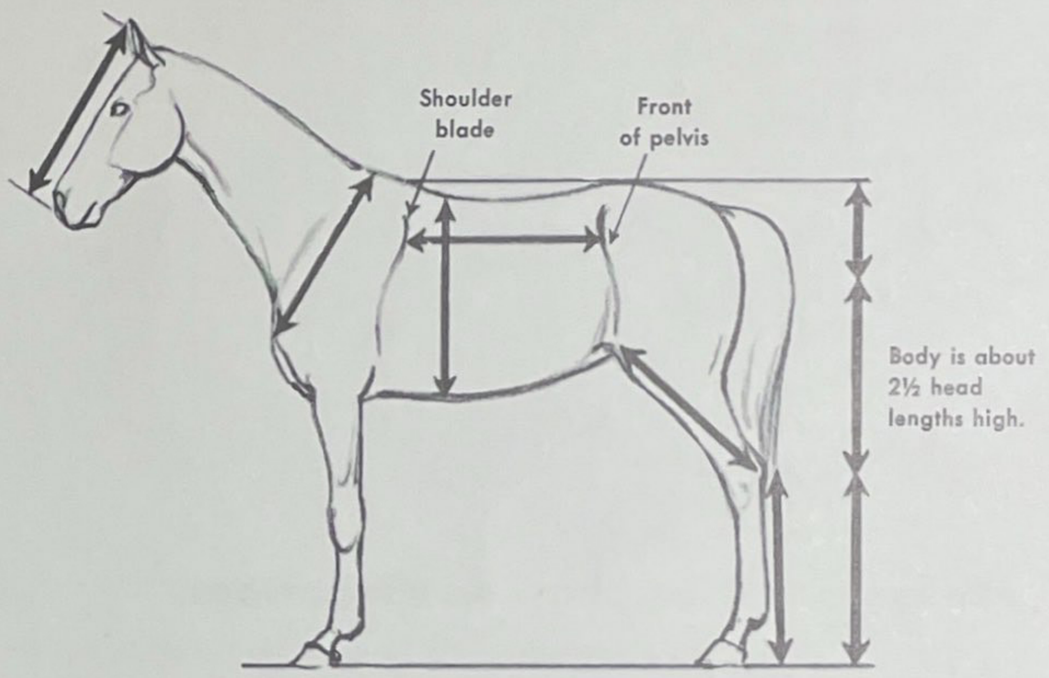
Side view: This horse is placed inside a square to make the measurements clear. Note that the front line of the head is parallel, roughly, to the front of the shoulder blade, which is at about the same slant as a line through the 1 and 7 on a clock.



Front view: The heavy lines emphasize the characteristic slope of the shoulder blades and almost triangular shape of the shoulder area.

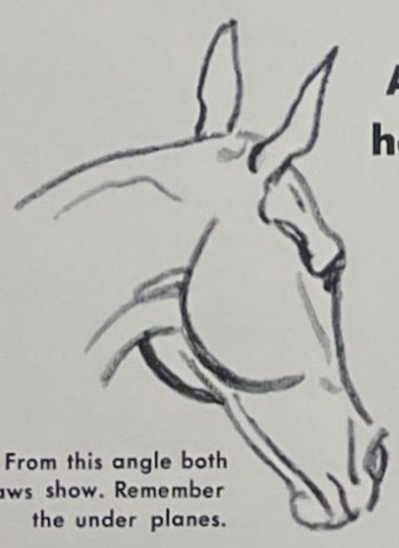


Back view: Here you can see the squarish shape of the horse's body at the rear. Notice how much wider the body is here.

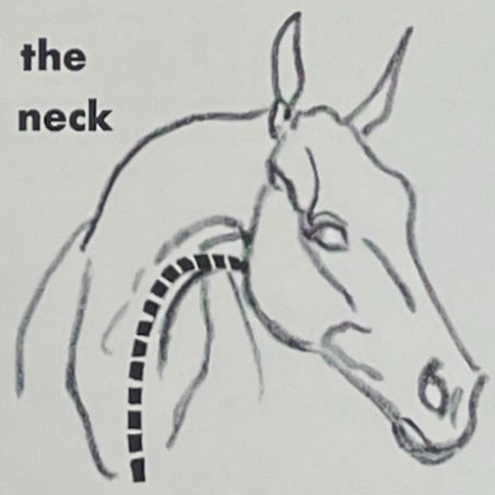


You can use the length of the head to check the measurements shown here (arrowed lines equal one head length).

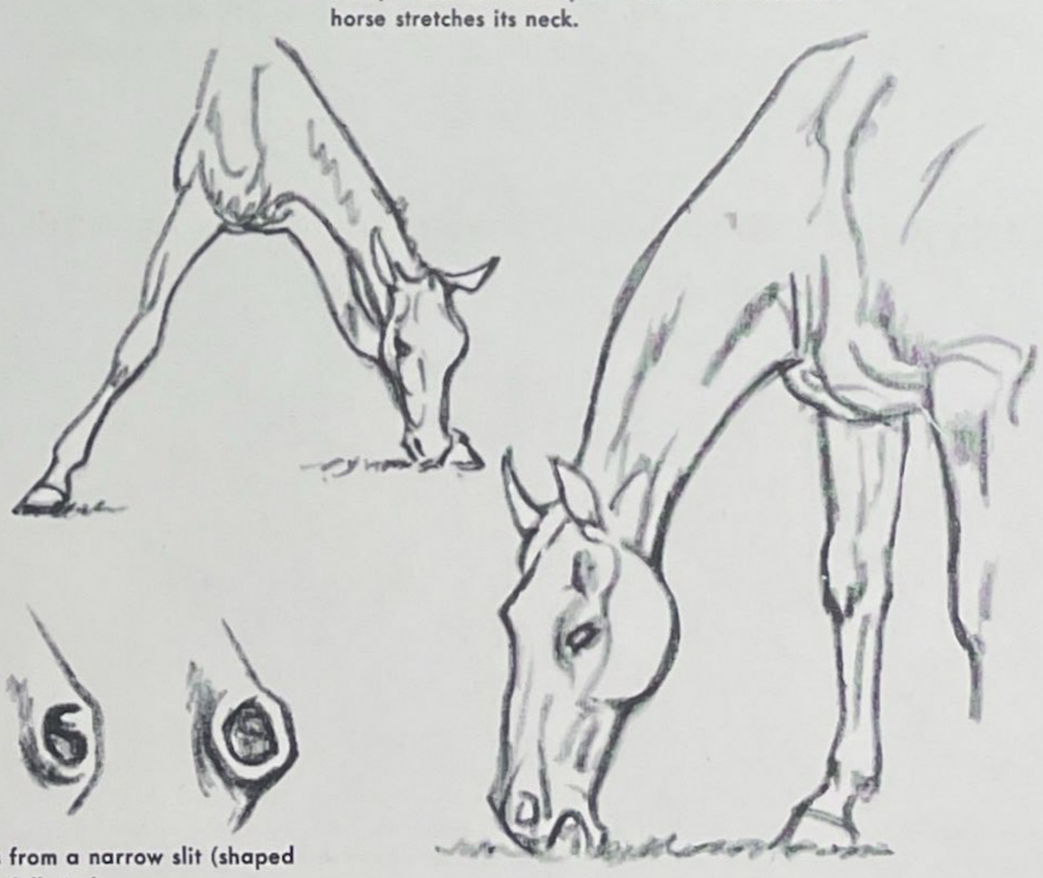
Action of the head and neck



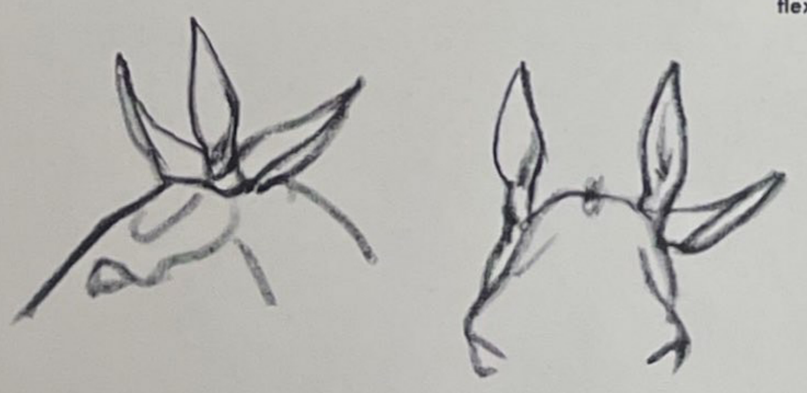
From this angle both jaws show. Remember the under planes.



Center line of neck helps in drawing this view. Note how flexible the upper part of the neck is.

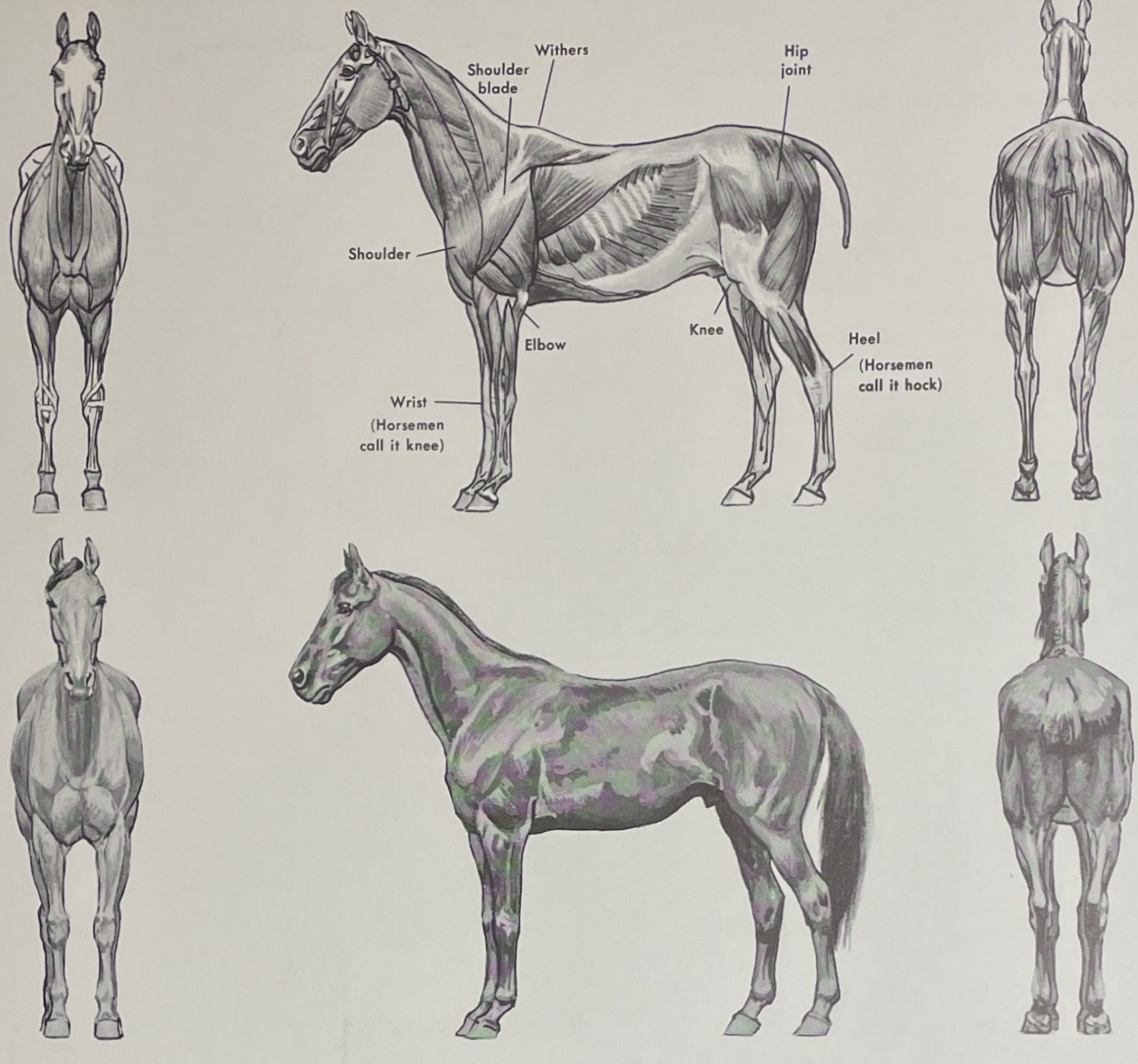


The colt *(left)* has legs that are quite long in relation to its body — it has to spread them in order to reach the ground. In contrast, the mature horse *(right)* can reach the ground easily. Note how the jaw stands out when the horse stretches its neck.



The ears have a wide range of movement.

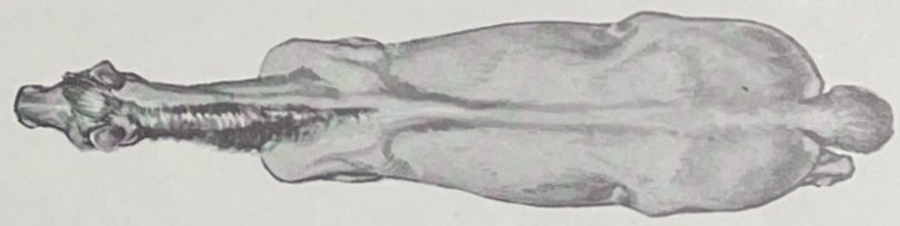
The nostril varies from a narrow slit (shaped like a "6") to a full circle.



The muscles that show on the surface

A horse is more than a smooth, even form of skin and flesh. Right on the surface you can see the hardness of the bone and the bulge of the muscle underneath. Before you can draw these forms, however, you must recognize them, and the illustrations here will help you do this. In the top row you see the actual structure of the muscles, and in the second row how they appear on the surface. As you study this page, turn back to page 6 so you can see the position of the bones in relation to the muscles.

When you draw a horse, don't show more muscles than you need to. Your goal is not to create an illustration for an anatomy text, but a good, lifelike picture. Draw the muscles only as they actually appear on the surface.

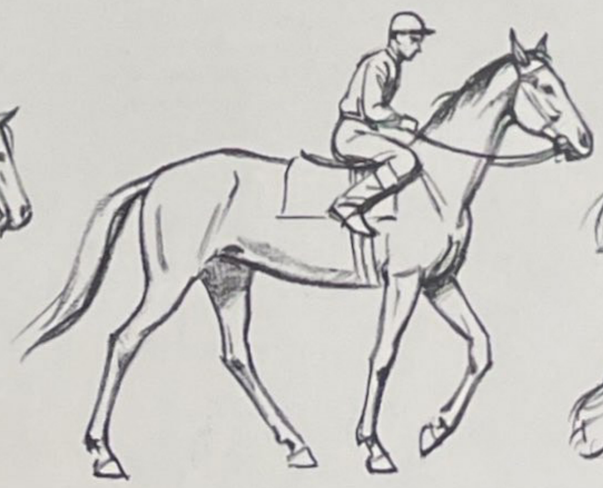


The bony framework of spine, shoulder blades, and hipbones is very prominent when we view the horse from above.

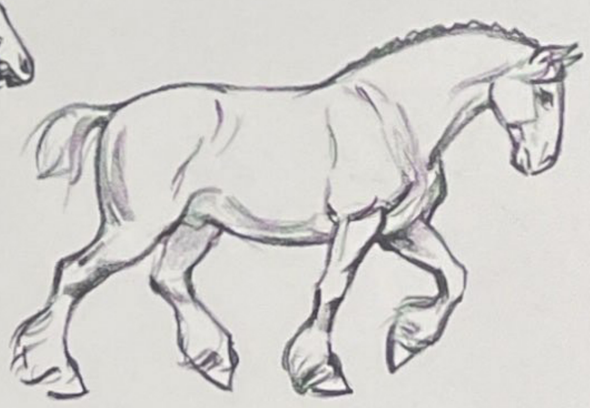
Each type of horse has its own proportions and characteristics

Show horse: It is bred and trained to hold its head high and lift its feet in a "prancing" manner. Its rump does not slant downward as much as other horses'.

Cow pony: This early western type has a straighter neck and moves in a much more relaxed manner than the show horse, except when in vigorous action.



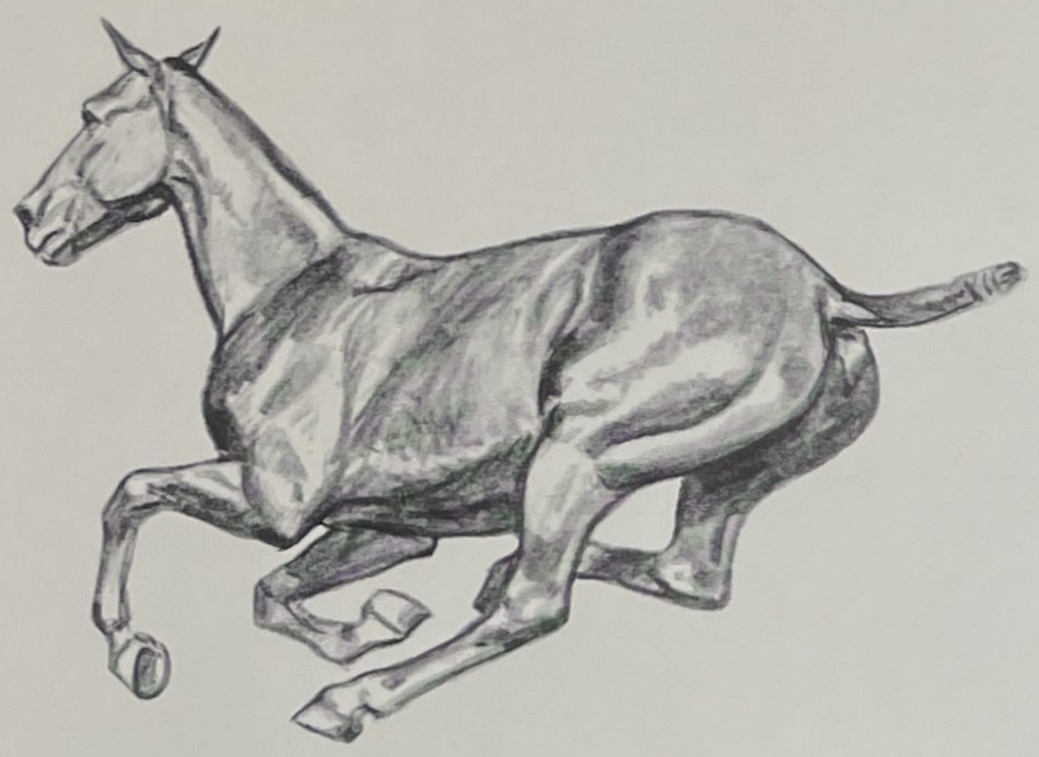
Race horse: Notice the long, thin legs and body. The rider perches well forward so that his weight is supported on the front legs.



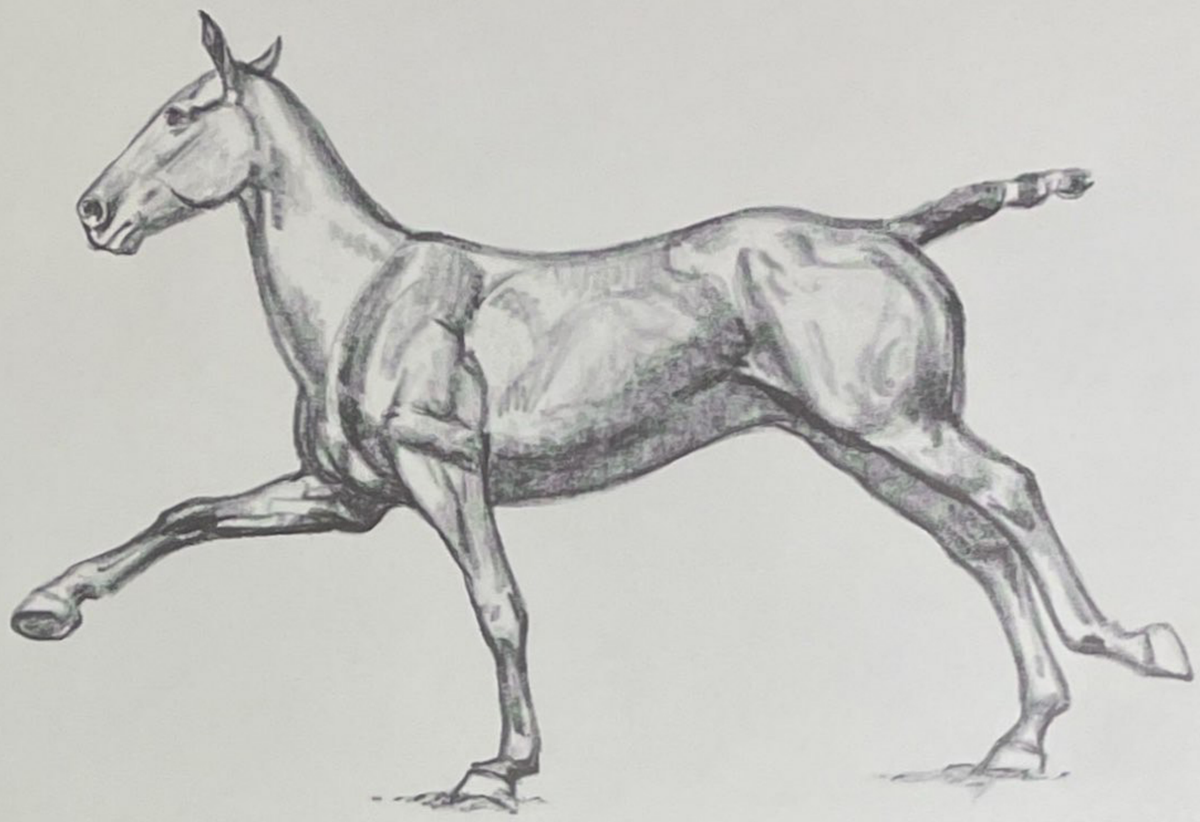
Draft horse: It is descended from the strong, bulky mounts of the heavily armored knights of old. Its wide back is ideal for circus performers.

How the horse moves

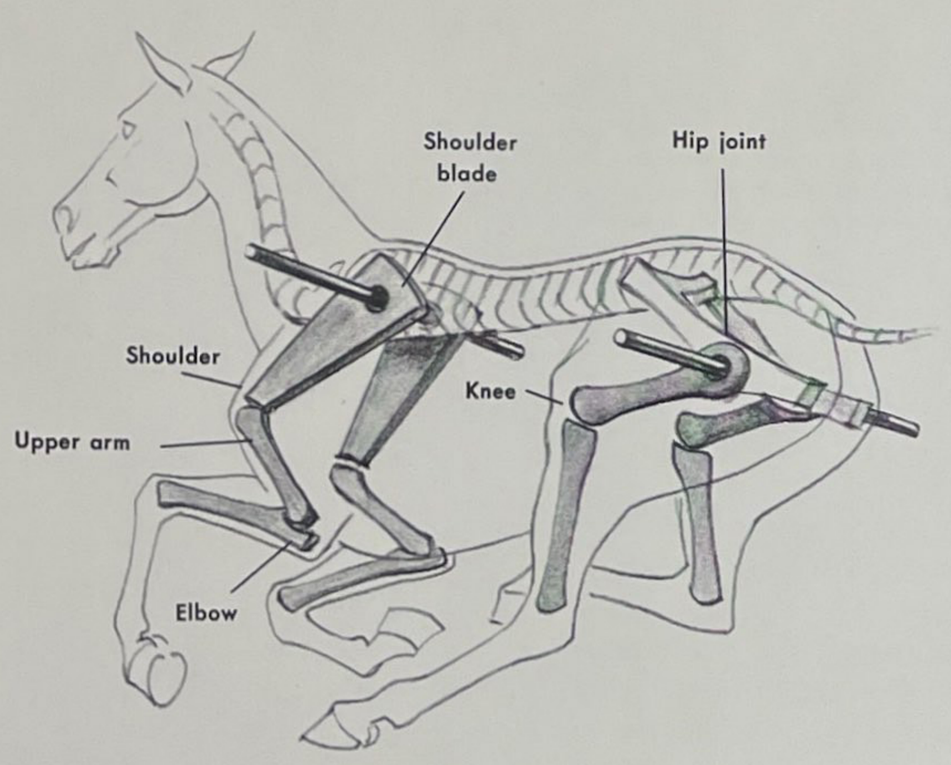
There is beautiful form and rhythm in the movement of the horse. To understand this movement and draw the horse in convincing action, you must know how the upper legs and the shoulder blades move. The diagrams here illustrate this. Always keep in mind that the horse's legs swing from pivot points high up on its body. The front legs swing from the top of the shoulder blades up near the withers, and the back legs swing from the hip joint near the top of the hindquarters.



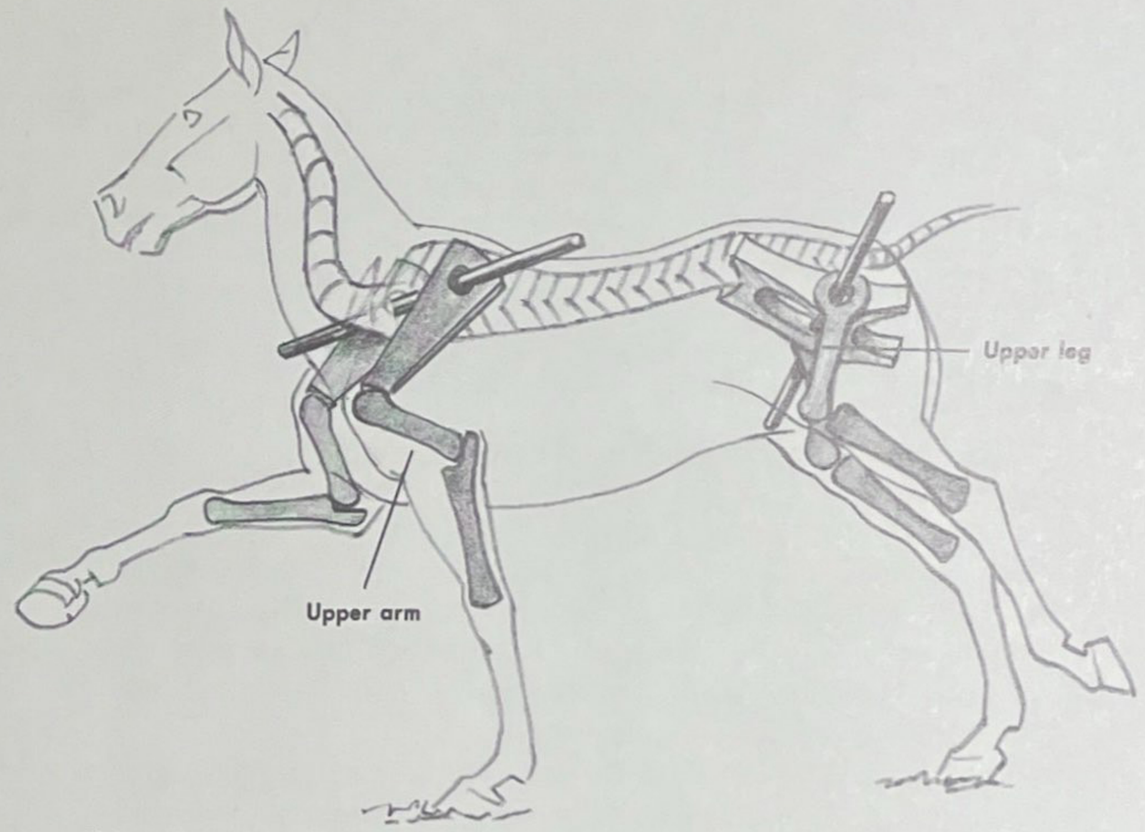
Study this position carefully and you will see that the near shoulder has swung forward and the elbow forward and down. The back legs have swung forward from the hip joints, also. You can see this clearly in the diagrams below.



In this view the animal's shoulder and elbow on the near side have swung back, while the shoulder and elbow of the far side have swung forward. Notice, too, that the entire hindquarters have swung up and back.

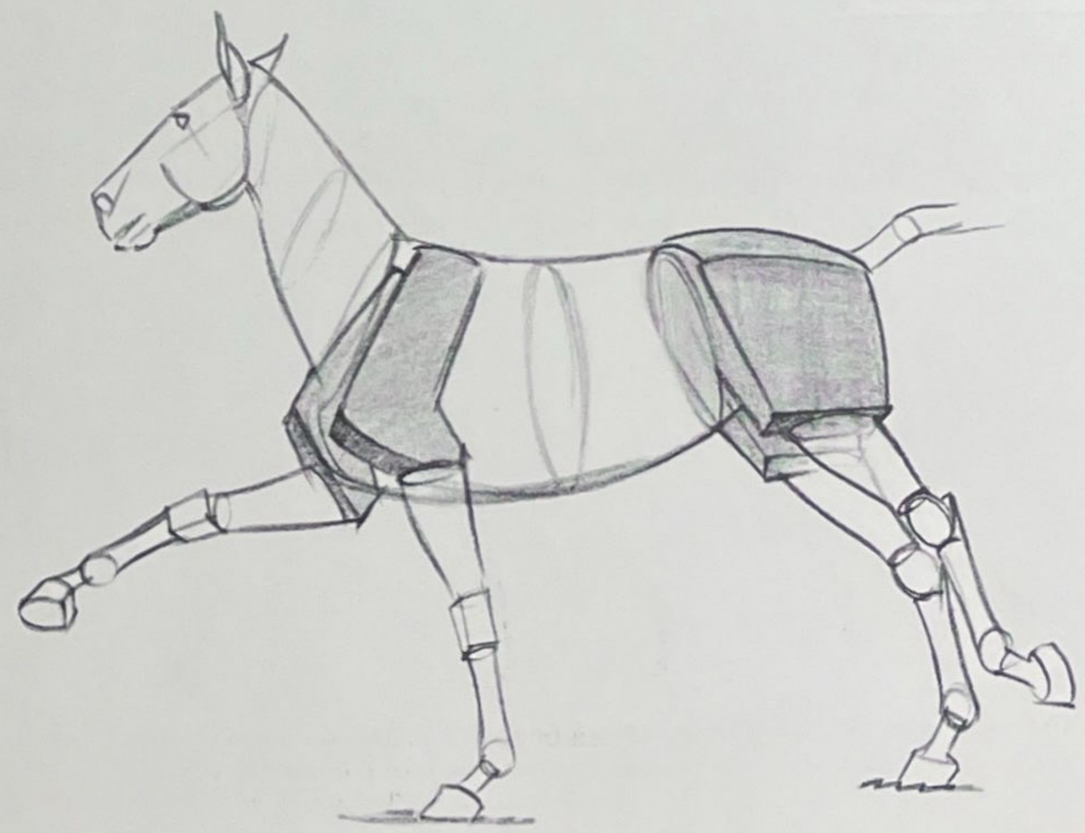


To illustrate dramatically the pivot points from which the legs swing, we've drawn an imaginary pole through these points of support. Observe how freely the legs and the shoulder blades can move from these points.



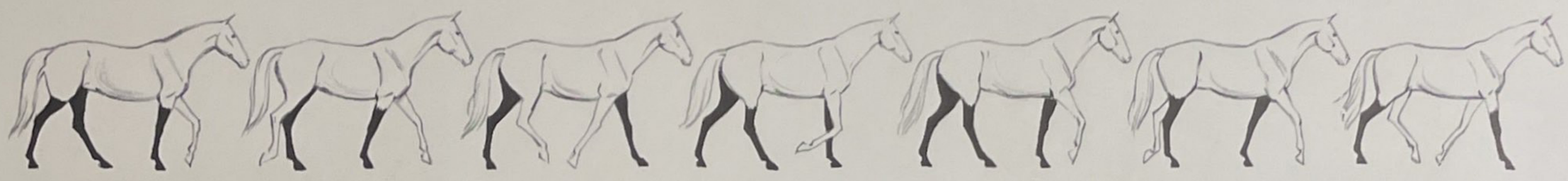
This analysis of the illustration above shows how the legs swing from pivot points in this position. The movements of these bones are disguised to some extent by the mass of muscles and outer flesh covering them.

In violent actions like this the basic forms do not stay rigid. The wedge-shaped shoulder area moves in two separate parts, and even the saddle-shaped hindquarters twist as the legs move alternately forward and back.



Compare the positions of the basic forms in this view with those in the drawing at the left and see how they change. These forms not only suggest the movements of the hidden bones and muscles, but can easily be developed into a finished drawing.

To show the gait sequence clearly, the legs touching the ground are darkened.



Walk: In this action there are always two or three feet on the ground at the same time. If you will compare the movement of the front and back legs you will see that the front leg moves forward and touches the ground just a moment after the back leg on the same side.

Trot: In the trot the animal lifts and moves the diagonal feet at the same time. Note the way the right rear and left front feet move forward or back at the same time, and the left rear and right front move together. Twice during each full stride all four feet are off the ground. These positions are marked with a star. The distance the feet are lifted from the ground varies. Sometimes they are merely dragged, while at others they are proudly lifted high. Just remember the simple rule — contact with the ground is made with the two diagonal feet.

The horse in motion — compared to other animals

When a horse walks, trots, or runs, its feet touch the ground in definite sequences. These movements are called gaits. Most of these gaits are the same for all animals, but there are some exceptions. On these two pages we show you the basic gaits and explain the differences where they occur.

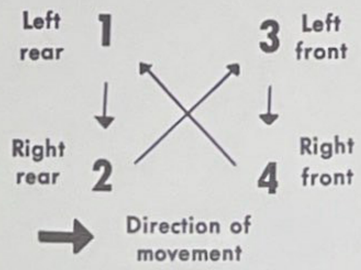
In the gaits pictured at the top and bottom of this page — the walk, trot, and rack or pace — all of the animals touch the ground with their feet in similar sequences. The gallop, however, varies with different animals. There are two different gallops, the diagonal and the rotary, shown on the facing page.

The diagonal gallop is a "cross" gallop. When the action starts with the left rear foot, the next foot striking the ground would be the right rear, then the left front, and finally the right front. The movement can also start with the right rear foot. The sequence then would be right rear, left rear, right front, and then left front. There is a point in this gait when all the legs are under the body at one time, and none of them is in contact with the ground. The diagonal gallop is used by the horse, cow, goat, hog, camel, and many other animals.

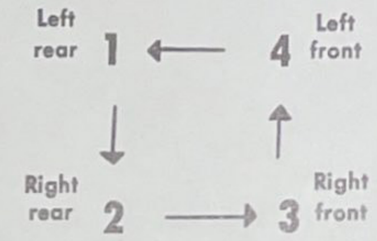
The rotary gallop is a "round" gallop. The simplest explanation of this kind of gallop is that the successive feet striking the ground go either clockwise or counterclockwise. For example, if the animal starts with the right rear foot touching the ground, it would then put down the left rear, left front, and right front in succession. The rotary gallop is used by the dog, deer, antelope, elk, and a few other animals.

As an animal gallops, the legs are alternately stretched out and tucked under the body. There is also a typical rocking motion. At the time the two forefeet are in contact with the ground the rear of the body is higher than the front, giving the body an over-all forward slant. At the moment the body is being thrust forward from the hind feet the opposite slant occurs.

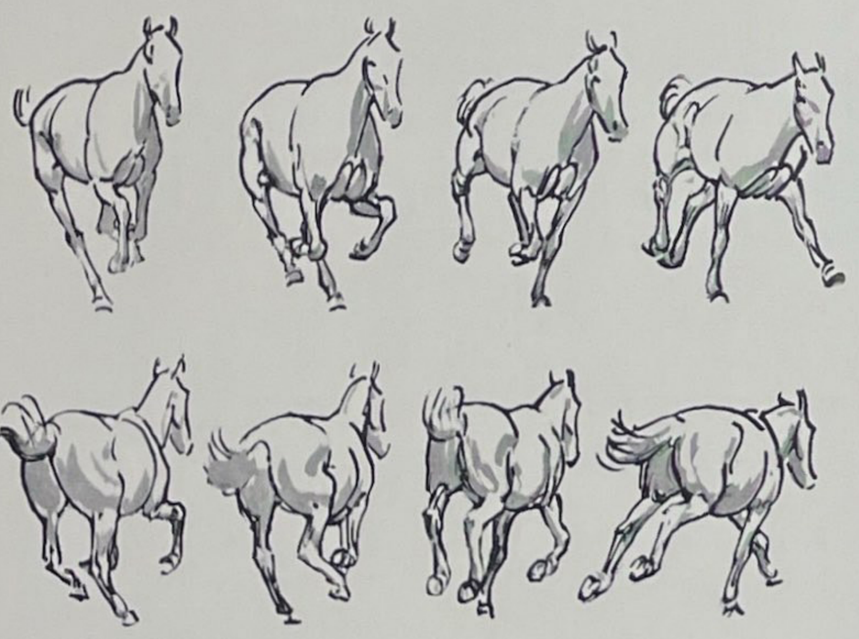
Pace or rack: In this movement the front and rear legs on the right side move forward at the same time. Similarly, the front and rear legs on the left side move at the same time. This gait is natural to the camel and the giraffe. The horse has to be trained to pace for harness racing.



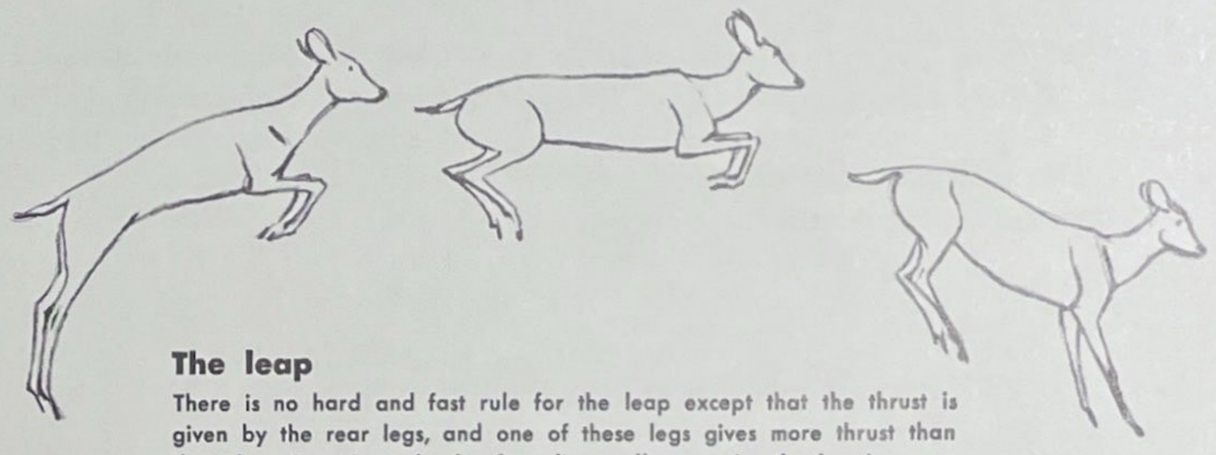
Diagonal gallop: Here the gallop starts with the left rear foot. The next foot to touch is the right rear, then across to the left front and, last, the right front, as shown by the darkened legs. The diagram at far right also illustrates this sequence.



Rotary gallop: In the gallop shown here the legs move counterclockwise. The order is: left rear — right rear — right front — left front. The legs can also move clockwise.

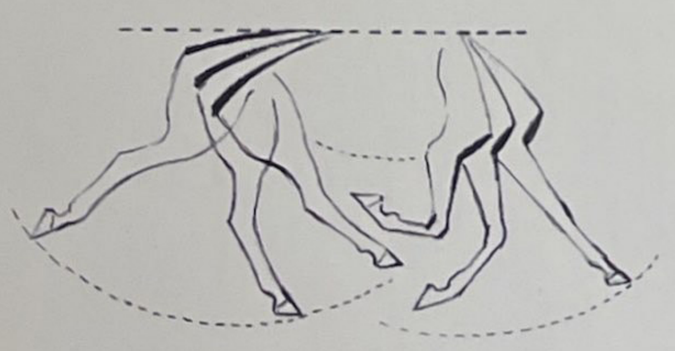


Galloping — front and rear views: These drawings of galloping actions seen from the front and rear show positions useful for the artist. Note how the head moves up and down with the different leg positions. When the legs are drawn together under the body, the head is high — when they are extended it is low. (The positions are not in sequence.)



The leap

There is no hard and fast rule for the leap except that the thrust is given by the rear legs, and one of these legs gives more thrust than the other. Sometimes the forefoot diagonally opposite the lagging rear foot strikes the ground first, and sometimes the other forefoot does. At the start and during the leap the forefeet are held well up near the body.

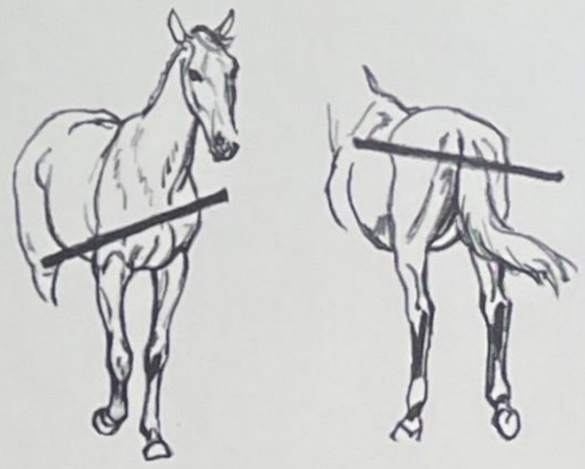


The backbone bends to allow the rear legs to move forward. Notice how this changes the outline of the top of the hindquarters. Observe, too, how the shoulder area moves forward and back with the front legs.

Body movement

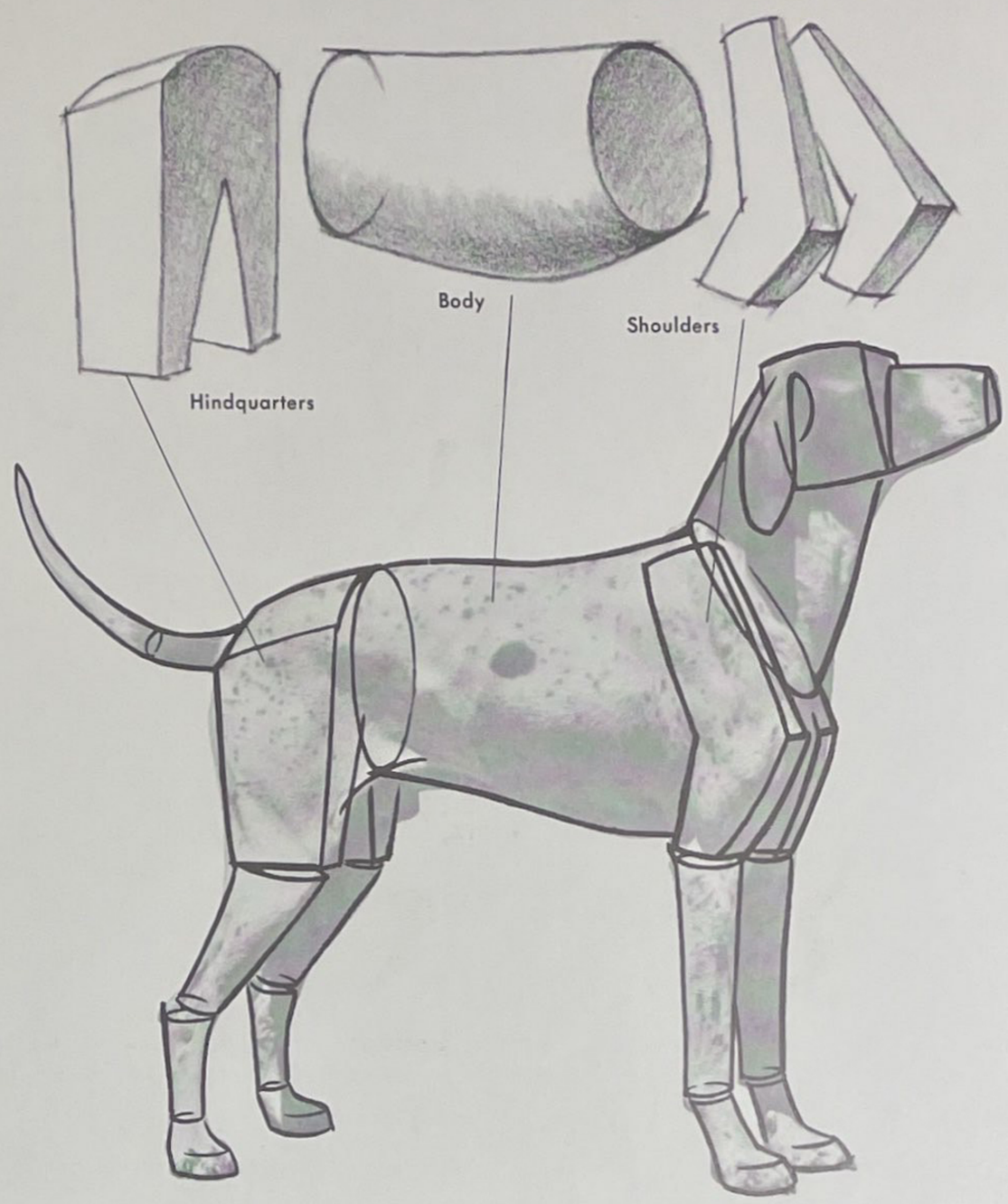
Although the horse's body is a solid mass, it is not rigid. These diagrams show some important places to watch for movement.

As the horse's legs move, there is a slight twist in the backbone and the shoulders slide forward and back. The hindquarters also twist.



As the horse shifts its weight from one leg to the other, its hips and shoulders move up and down accordingly, just as in the human figure.

How to draw the dog



The dog is so much smaller than the horse that it seems a very different animal, but what you have learned about the one will help you greatly in drawing the other. In basic structure the two are much alike, the main difference being in the proportion of the leg bones and the structure of the feet. Look at the diagrams on page 6 and you will quickly see this.

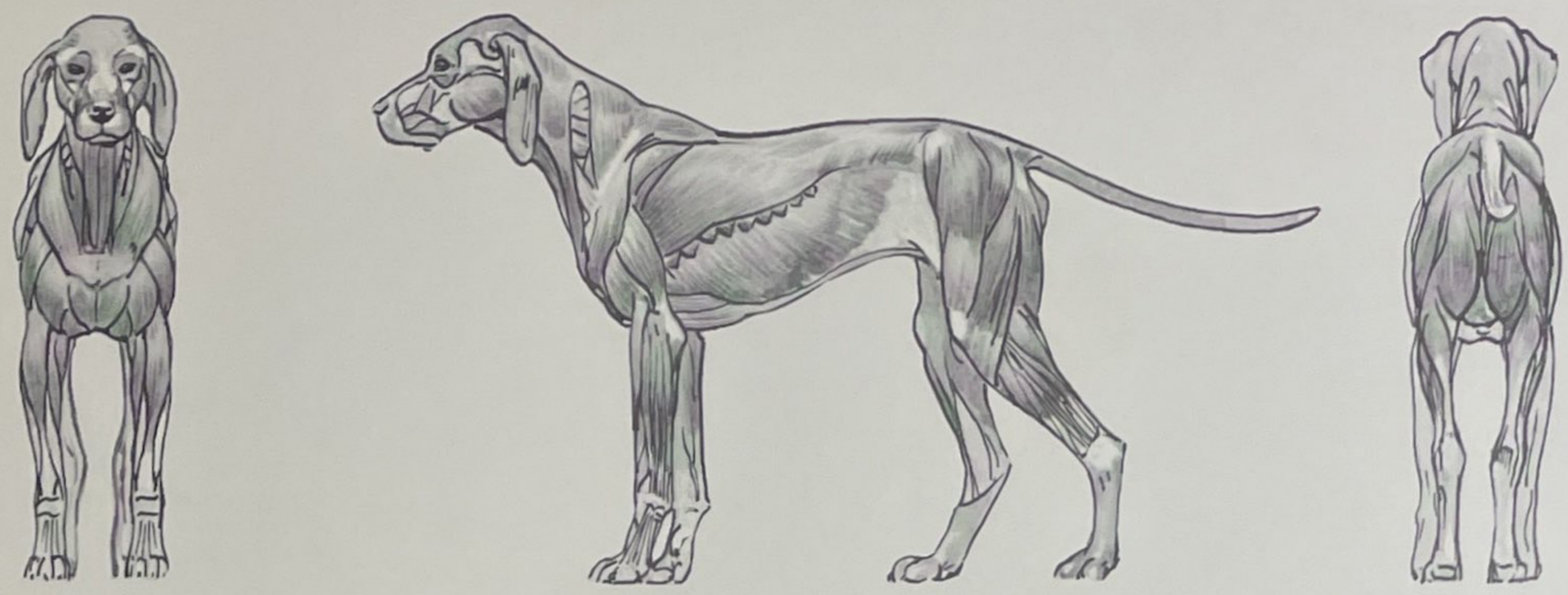
Above, we have taken an "average" dog and reduced it to its basic forms. Notice that the "saddle" shape representing the hindquarters is a little longer and thinner than in the horse. This is because the dog's "knee" is well below the body.

Of course there are all kinds and types of dogs. Some have long legs, some have short. Some have long, pointed noses; others, like the bulldog, have almost flat ones. The basic structure is the same, however. In some dogs this structure is easy to see, in others less so. In a collie, for example, much of the form is hidden by the long hair. But you must understand this solid form to draw the dog properly, or it will look like a shapeless ball of fur. Always analyze the structure before you draw.

1 Working freely, lightly suggest the general size and position of the dog. Indicate the action of leg bones and shoulder blades.

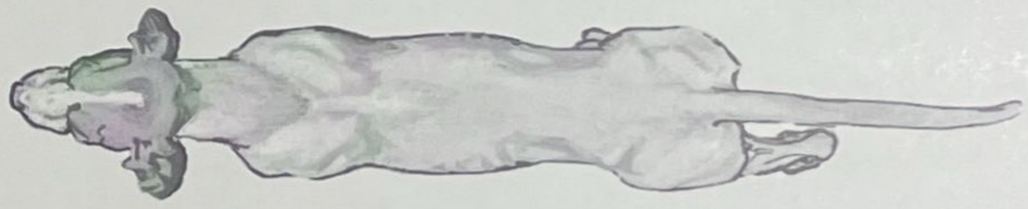
2 Now block in the basic forms. Draw through to be sure that the parts fit together correctly.

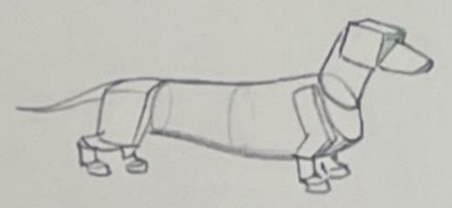
3 Keeping in mind the bone and muscle structure beneath, add surface detail, but do not lose the large, solid form.



The muscles inside and outside

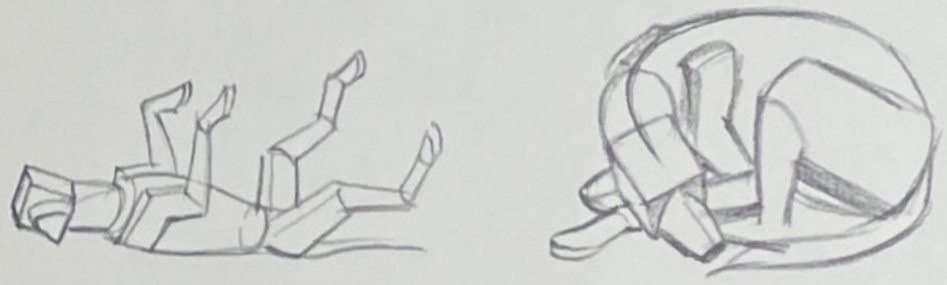
You can easily see this dog's muscle structure on the surface of its body. Study the top and bottom rows of drawings above and note how certain muscle forms show through the skin. Check these drawings with the skeleton structure on page 6. As you do this, notice how clearly the rib cage shows on the surface and how, in the view from above *(right)*, the forms caused by the shoulder blades stand out. These are especially important points to look for when drawing a short-haired dog like this.





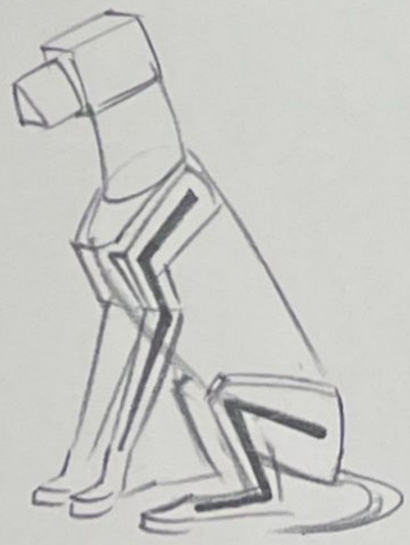
The same forms but different proportions and you have a dachshund.

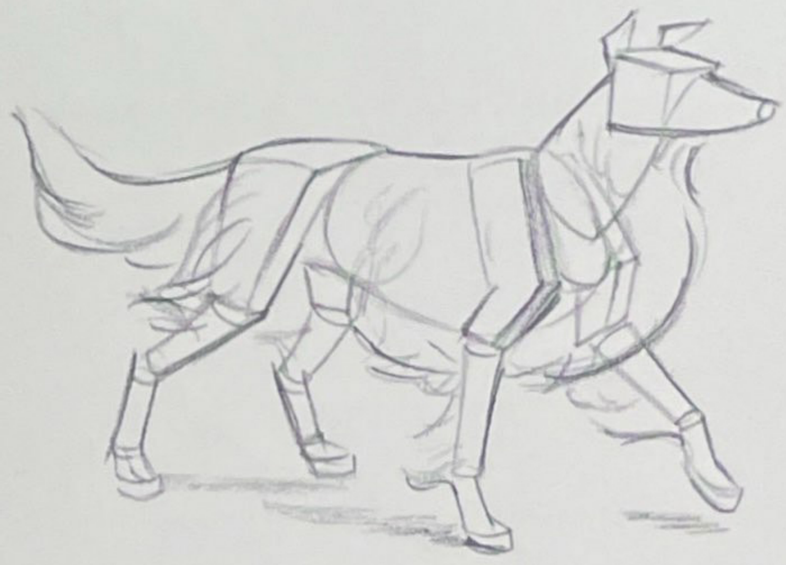
With the basic forms you can draw any type of dog — in any position.



Unusual positions are easily drawn with the basic forms.

The leg bones of the dog have a zigzag direction. Notice particularly the extended rear legs of the running dog and the folded-up rear legs of the sitting dog.



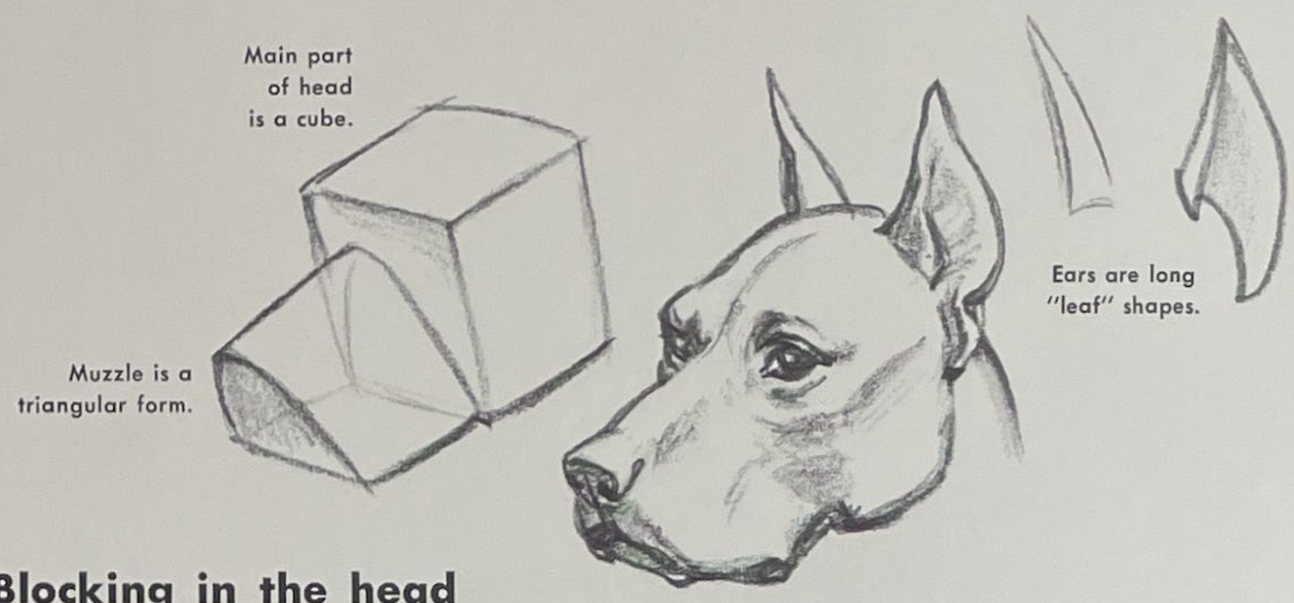


Sketch the basic forms first to get construction and action — then draw the surface shapes, hair, etc.

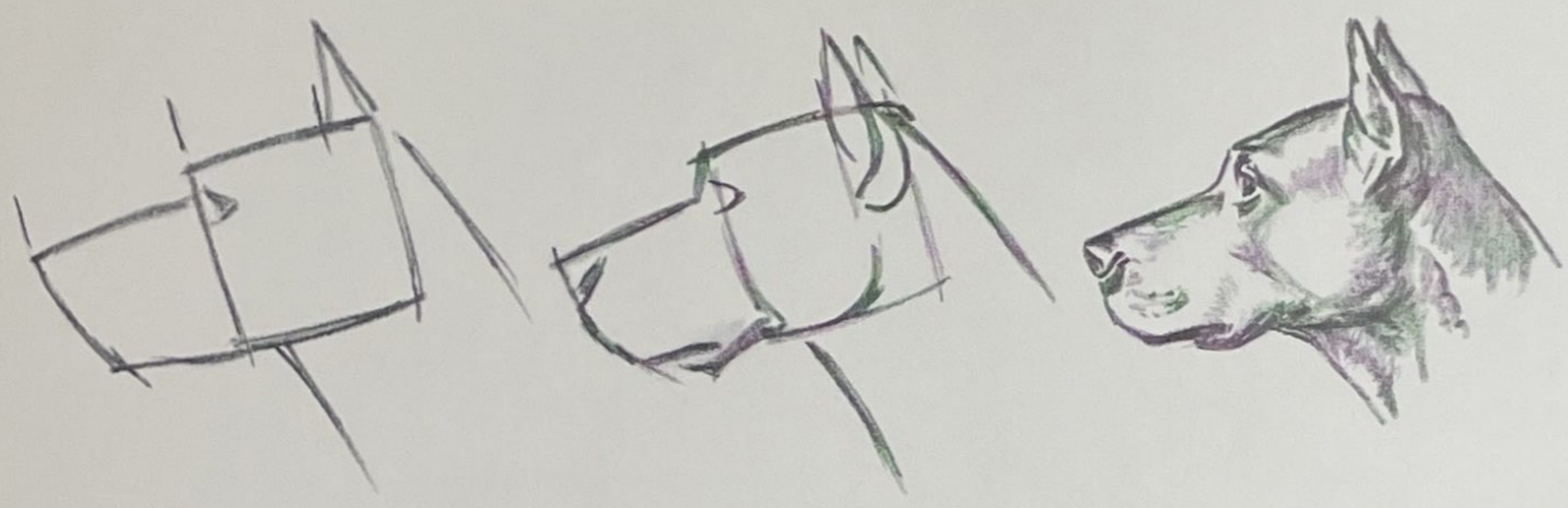
Drawing the dog's head

The dog is one of the most expressive of animals. Its face shows every emotion clearly, and its body gesture or attitude emphasizes the emotion. This, as you can see at the right, makes the dog an ideal "ham" actor, and a useful character in many illustrations.

There is no special problem in simplifying the dog's head to its basic forms. A cube form gives us the main part containing the eyes, a more or less triangular form gives us the muzzle. The ears are "leaf" shaped. These forms vary with different breeds, but once you have learned to draw the general shape you can easily make the necessary adjustments.



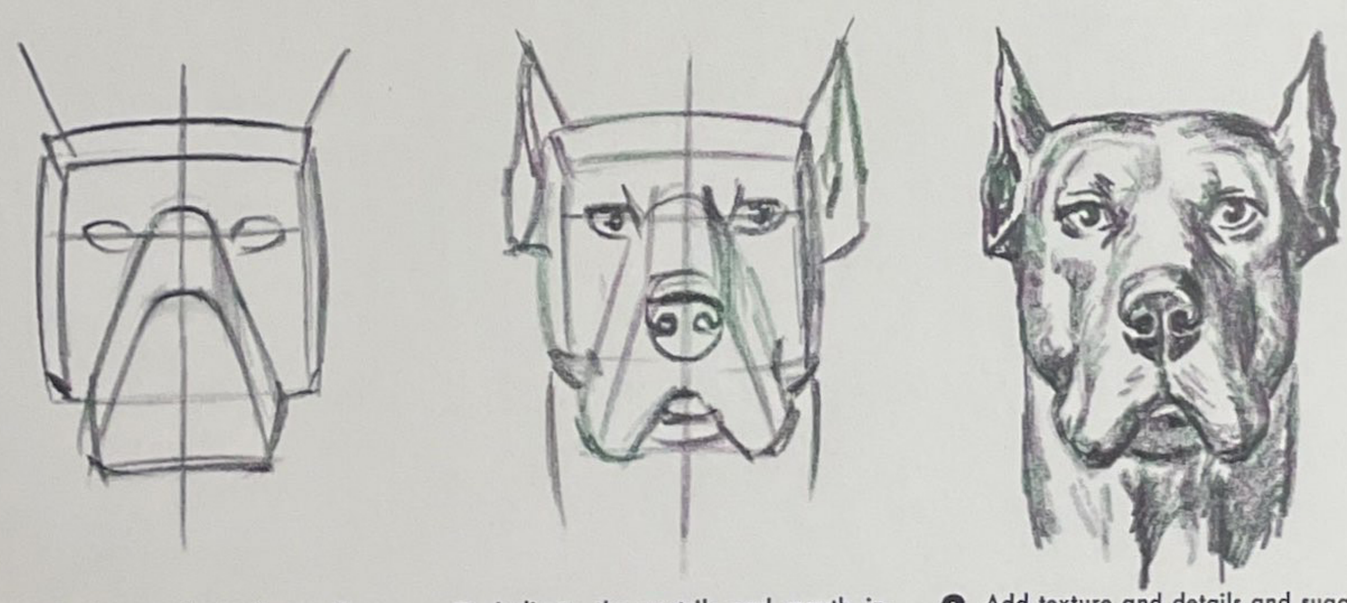
Blocking in the head



1 Sketch the two main portions of the head. (Note the "step-down" in front of the eye.) Indicate the ear at the rear of the skull. Show the neck at a slant as illustrated.

2 A line one-third the distance from the back of the skull to the eye locates the back of the jawbone. The ear fits on just behind this. Indicate the nostril and looseness of the lips.

3 Add modeling and texture, but don't lose the solid forms. Define the eye and eye socket, making sure not to draw them flat, but curving around in front of the cranium.

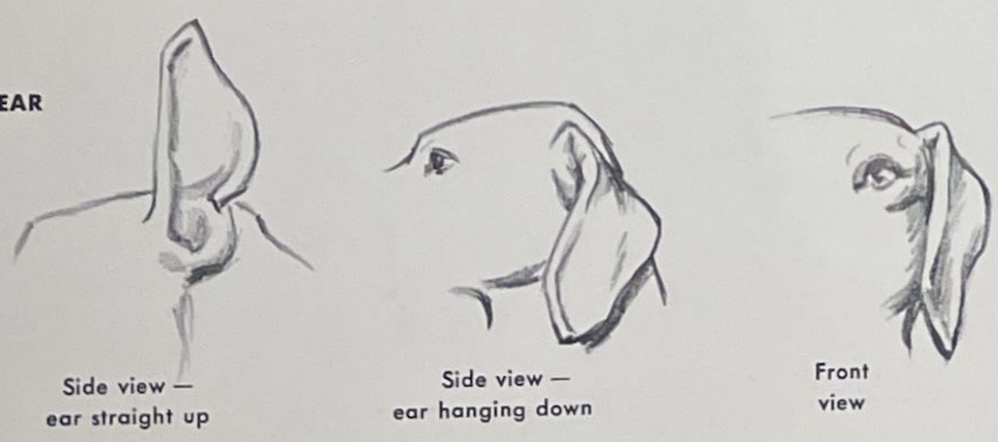


1 Block in the two basic forms. Here we are looking slightly down on the head, so we can see the top planes. Place the eyes near the sides of the square shape.

2 Indicate the nostrils and mouth inside the front triangular shape. Locate the ears at the upper corners of the square shape. Notice how the lips slant down and out.

3 Add texture and details and suggest high lights on the eyes and nose. Note how the eye sockets are indicated by the suggestion of the bones of the forehead and cheek.

THE EAR



The dog expresses many moods

NORMAN ROCKWELL

Anxiety: This dog, with its furrowed brow, expresses pain and concern over its hurt paw. Pictures of dogs with children always have a strong appeal.

ALBERT DORNE Courtesy Westinghouse Electric Corp.

Contentment: The drooping lines of this St. Bernard suggest complete relaxation as it gladly serves as a hassock for its young friend.

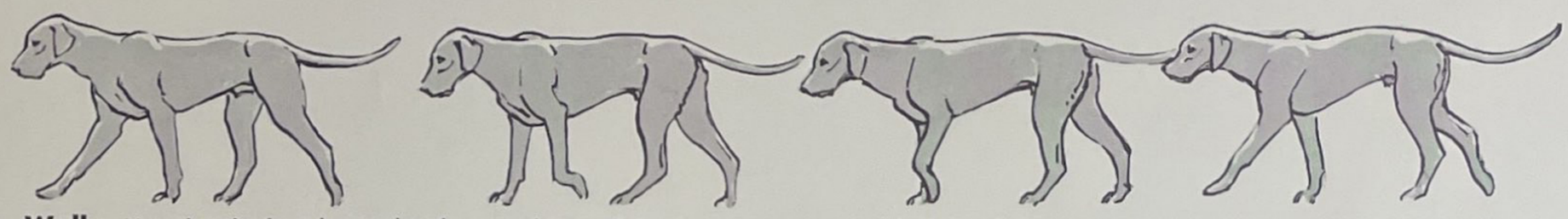
HAROLD VON SCHMIDT Courtesy Cosmopolitan Magazine

Defeat: This dog expresses the utter dejection of its master. Note the cringing attitude and "tucked under" tail.

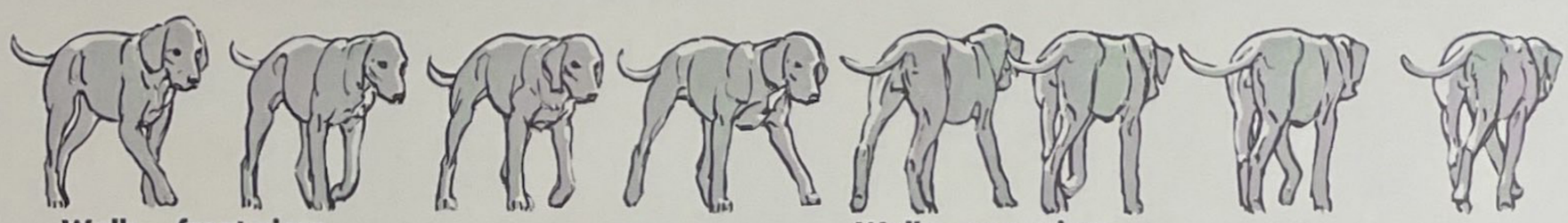
NORMAN ROCKWELL

Anticipation: Off for a weekend trip, this pup emphasizes the mood of the entire family.

Gaits of the dog



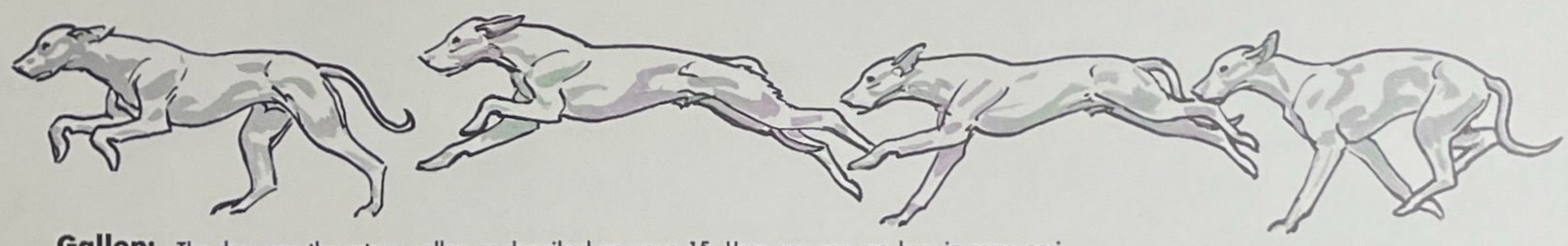
Walk: Note that the front leg touches the ground just a little after the corresponding back leg does.



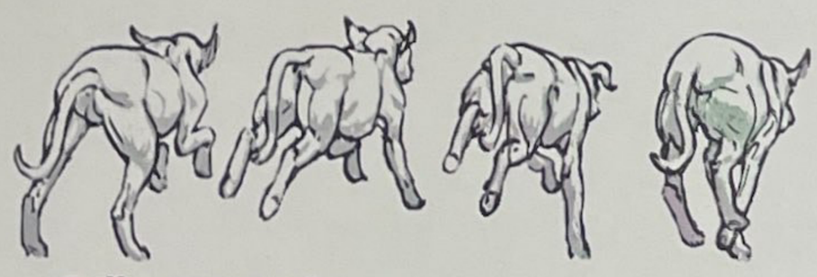
Walk — front view

Walk — rear view

Trot: Just as with the horse, the dog's right front leg moves forward at the same time as its left rear leg, and its left front leg moves at the same time as its right rear.

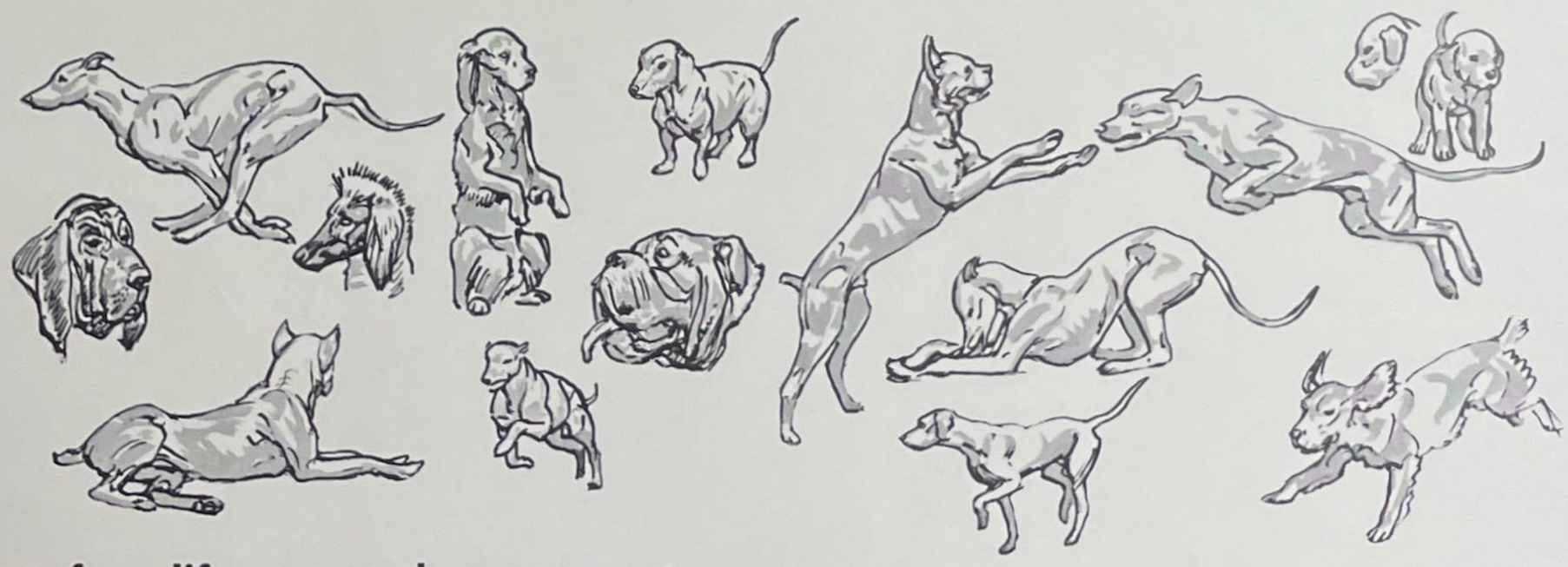


Gallop: The dog uses the rotary gallop as described on page 15. Here you can see how in some positions all four feet are beneath the body, and in other positions all four feet are extended.



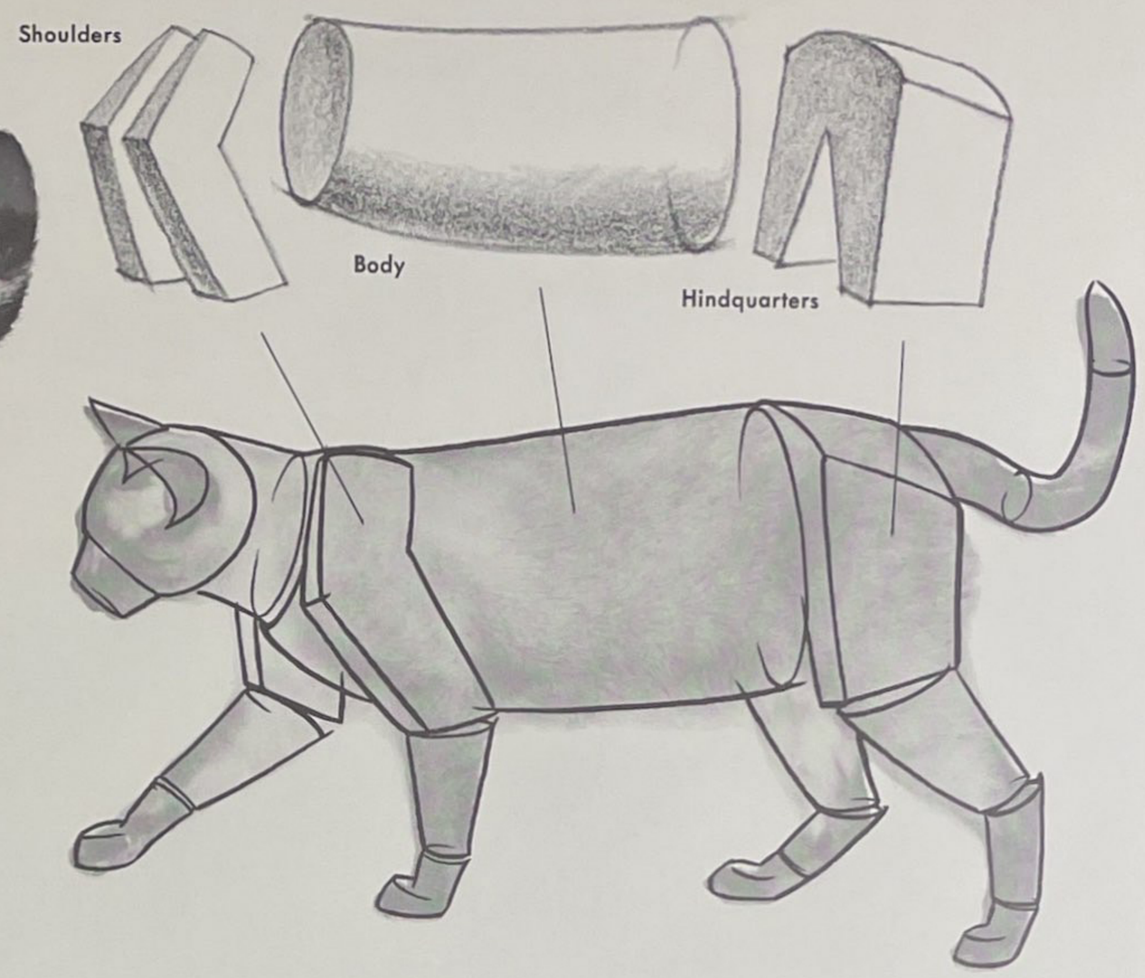
Gallop — rear view

Gallop — front view



Draw from life — every chance you get

Dogs are usually readily available to sketch from. Make it a habit to study and sketch their actions. As you do so, think of the positions of the shoulder blades, leg bones, rib cage, etc. Don't merely draw a cold, mechanically constructed animal, however. Try for the spirit of the action. Notice the strong feeling of life and of animal personality in these drawings by Harold Von Schmidt.

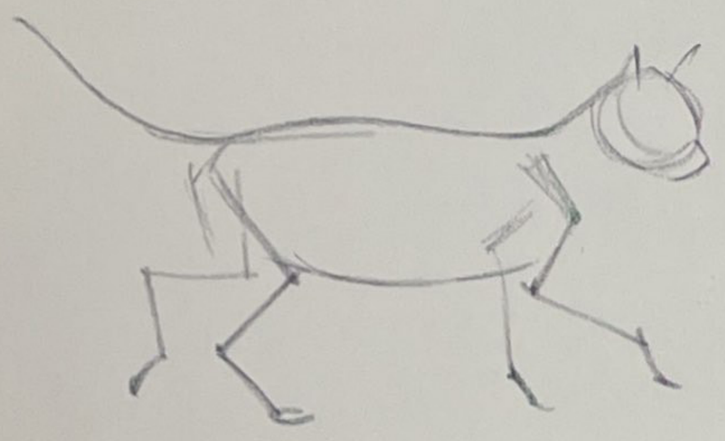


How to draw the cat

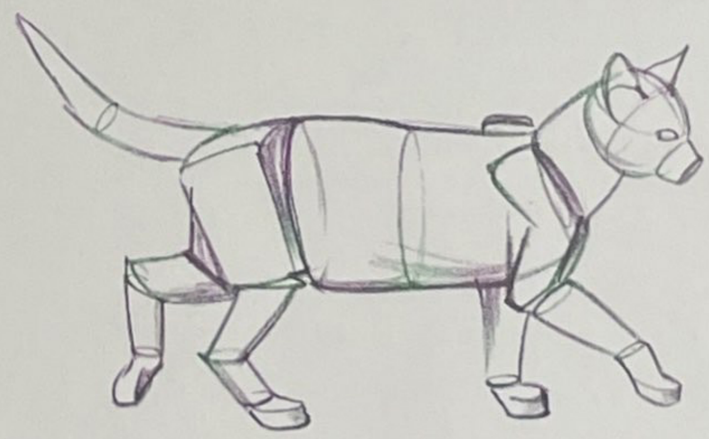
The cat is a born climber and leaper. As it moves, there is a flow of action that runs through its entire body, giving it a special gracefulness that marks the whole cat family. When you draw the cat, keep this quality in mind and be sure to put down on your paper the slim, sleek lines that make a cat a cat.

The basic forms used in learning to draw the cat are similar to those of the horse and dog, but different in proportion. The cat's head is small and the body long. It has a small rib cage and the bottom line of the body goes almost straight back from it. In this respect the cat differs markedly from the dog. The dog has the deep chest of a long-distance runner, and the bottom line curves sharply upward from it, as you can see on page 17.

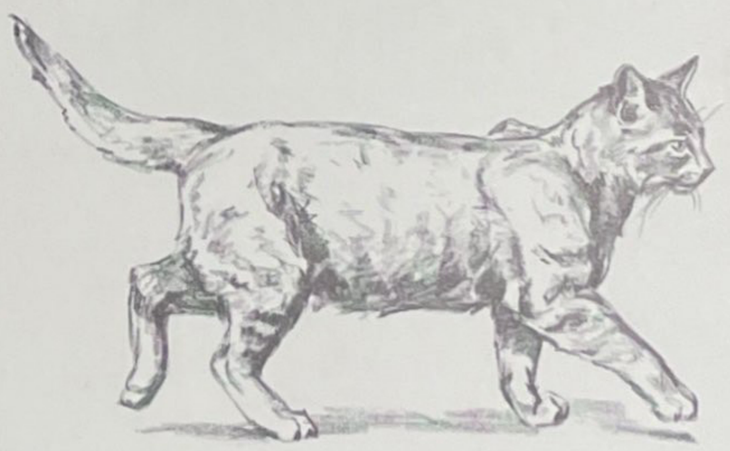
There are some interesting differences, too, in the heads of the cat and the dog. The average dog's jaws and nose project in the form of a well-defined muzzle. The cat's muzzle, by contrast, is quite short. The dog detects its prey chiefly by smell and its long nose is a useful adaptation for this purpose. The cat, however, hunts mainly by sight. For its size, it has the largest eyes of all the meat-eating or carnivorous animals. The pupils are narrow slits in bright light, but at night they open wide to admit as much light as possible and help the animal to see. The cat's eyes have a greenish glow in the dark.



1 Sketch a curved line representing the top of the neck, body, and tail. Indicate the action of the leg bones and shoulder blades, and the bottom line of the body.

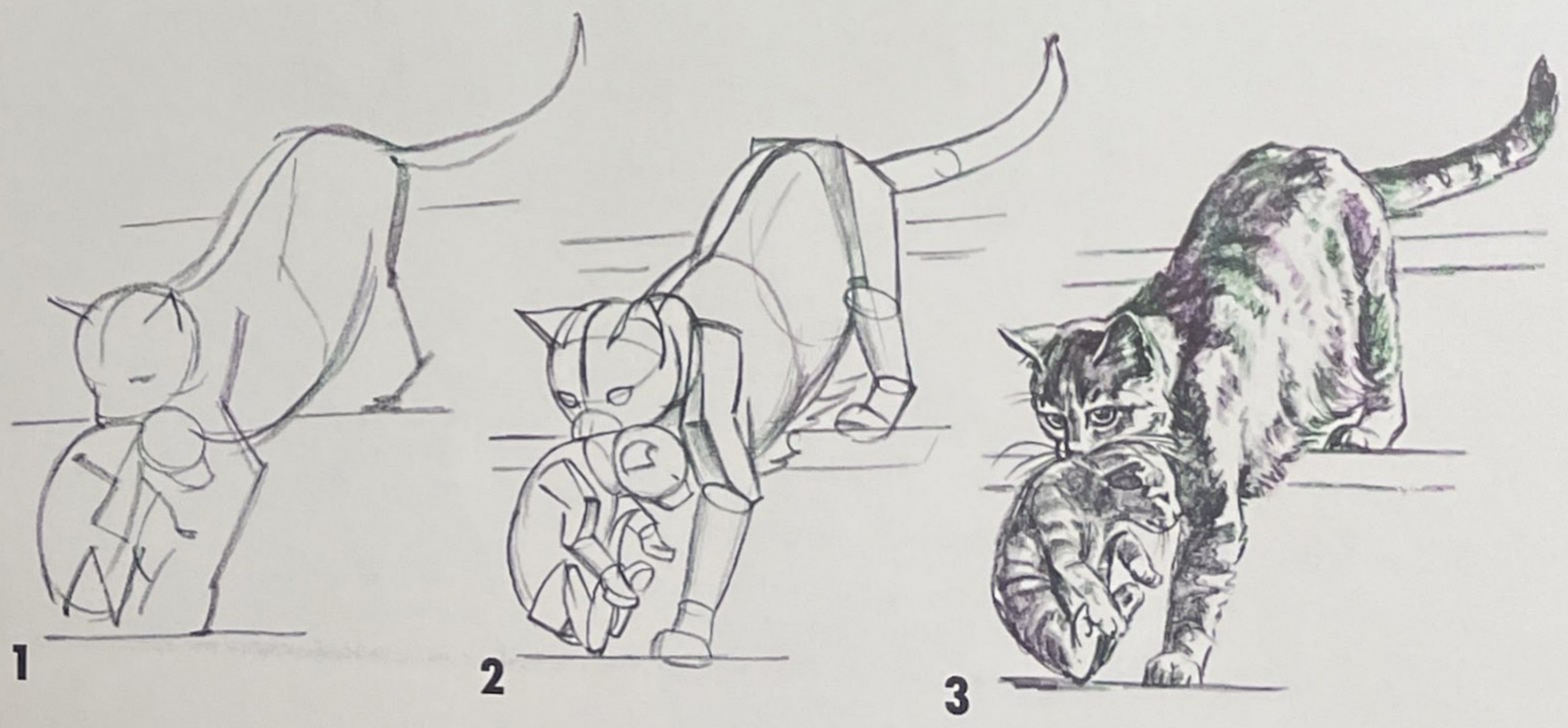


2 Block in the basic forms. Notice that the front leg starts its action at the top of the shoulder blade, and this entire form moves as a unit.



3 Now add the surface detail and shading. Retain the feeling of the solid structure underneath even when you are drawing a cat with long hair.

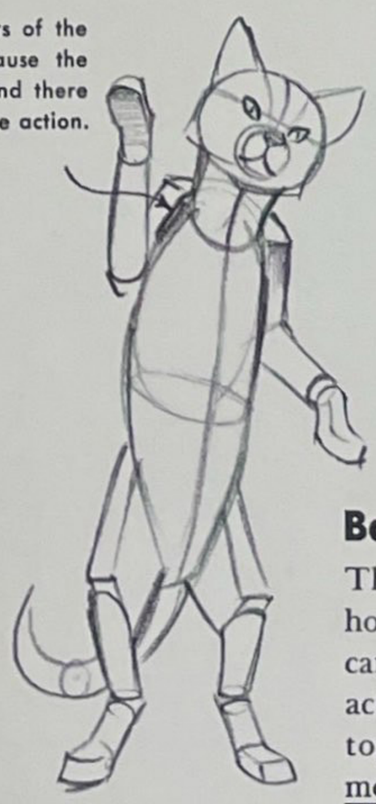
Here is an interesting foreshortened pose of a mother cat carrying her kitten — and a demonstration of how to draw this pose, using the basic forms. The center line over the cat's head and along her back helps relate all of the parts of the body in a smooth, graceful action. Notice the shoulders — the mother's move forward along her neck while the kitten's hang down along its body.



The cat's muscles

These drawings show you how the muscle structure affects the appearance of the cat. As you study the muscles, look at page 23, where the movements of the skeleton are analyzed. Observe how the structure of bone and muscle creates curves and sharp angles in the mobile form of the animal.

The front legs and shoulders of the cat move quite freely because the rib cage is small in front and there is no collarbone to cramp the action.

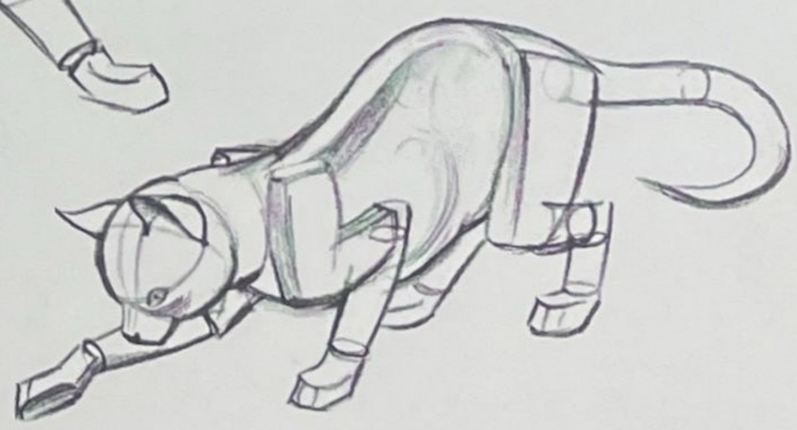


The kitten is similar to the cat in construction, but the body is shorter and the head larger in proportion.

Study this characteristic pose of a sitting cat. Note carefully where the shoulder blades are, and the large curve of the flexible spine.

Basic forms in action

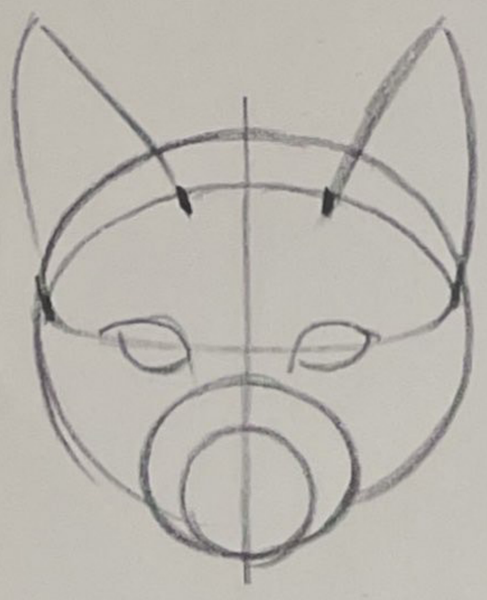
These basic form drawings show how our method of blocking in can be used to draw cats in any action. Notice that the forms act together to create an over-all movement throughout the body.



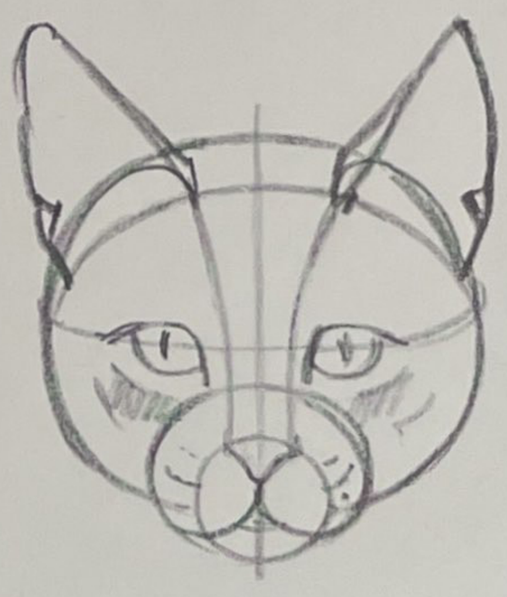
This crouching gesture is typical. Note the action of the shoulder blades and upper front legs. The extended paw is turned sideways as the cat slaps at some small object.

Drawing the cat's head

Many artists have found the head of the cat, with its strange eyes – by turns alert, intense, brooding, or sleepy – a fascinating subject to draw. We can reduce this head to a ball, longer and wider than it is high, with a small tapering cylinder in front, containing the nose and mouth. The eyes are much nearer the nose than in most other animals. The triangular ears are on the back third of the head.

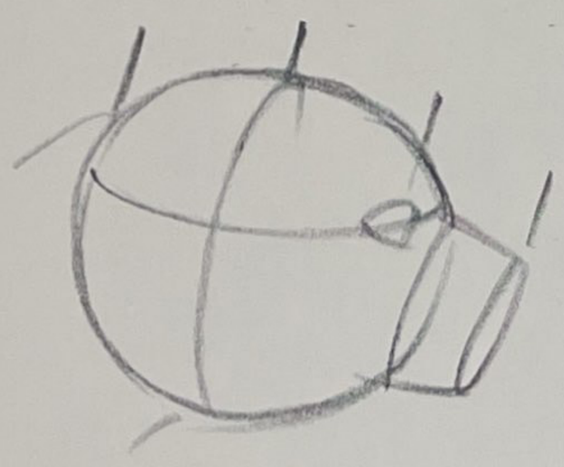


1 Draw the ball and cylinder. Just above the cylinder, sketch a curved guide line to locate the eyes and the bottom corners of the ears. Across the top of the ball, draw another line and locate the ears behind it as shown. Note that they are about one ear-width apart.

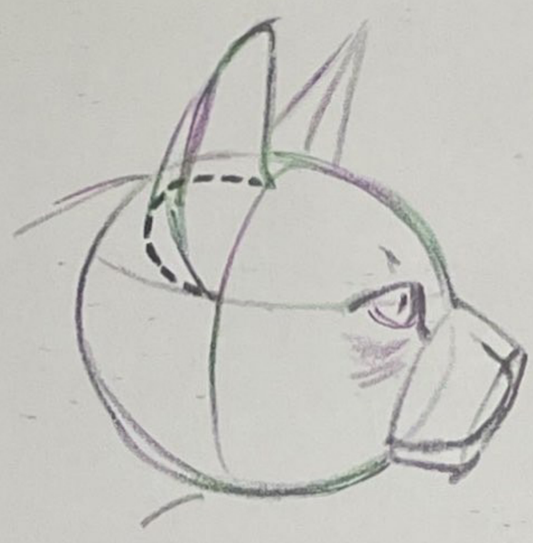


2 Sketch the nose, mouth, and chin. Curved lines run up from the nose and flow smoothly into the outline of the ears. Notice how the upper lip is divided. The cheekbones below the eyes curve upward around the side of the face. Indicate notch on side of each ear.

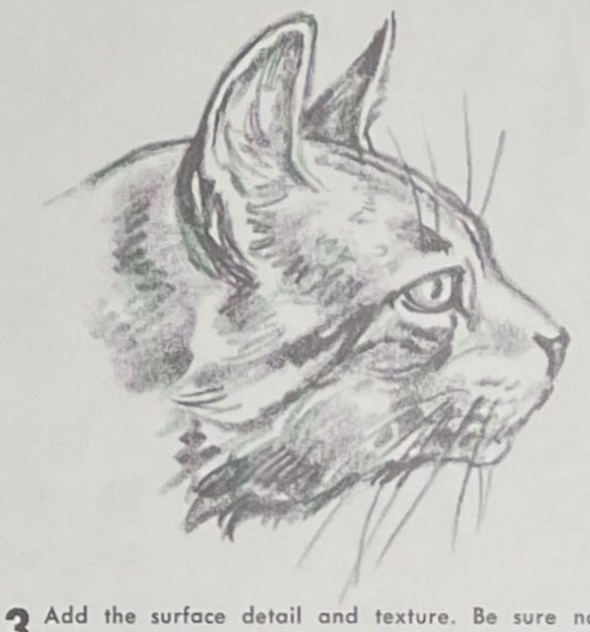
3 Refine your details and add texture. Note the shape of the pupils and that the whiskers grow in rows — not haphazardly. The ears, of course, can move to different positions. Individual cats or breeds will vary somewhat in shape, markings, and length of hair.



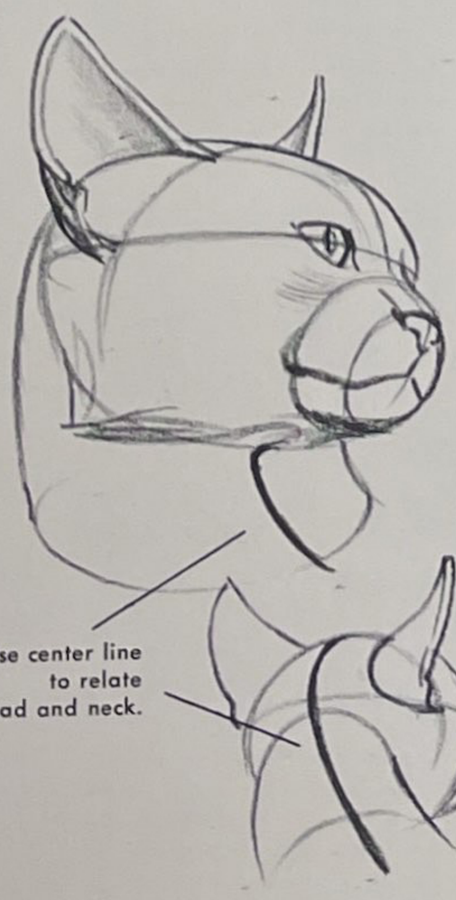
1 Sketch in the basic forms. Draw a horizontal guide line about a third down from the top of the ball. On this line, locate the eye about one-third from the nose to the back of the head. Sketch a vertical line around the ball halfway between the eye and the back of the head to locate the ears.



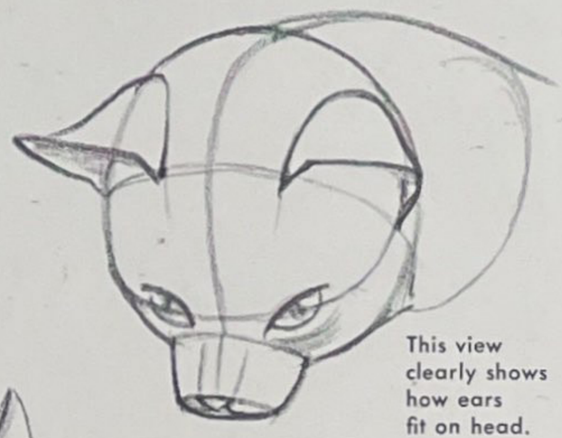
2 Place the ears, using the horizontal and vertical lines. "Draw through" the base of the ear, shown here as a dotted half-circle. Note how the neck joins high on the back of the head, forming a smooth curve with the top. Sketch in the nose and mouth as shown.



3 Add the surface detail and texture. Be sure not to draw the eye flat on the side of the head, but in a foreshortened position, as it curves around toward the front of the face. Note the notch on the side of the ear and also the prominent hairs over the eye.



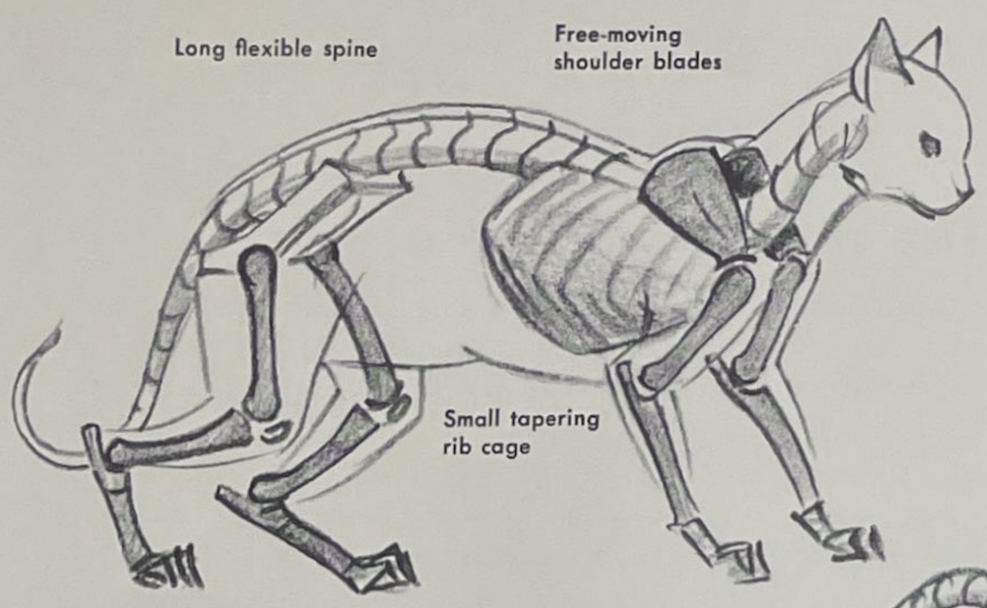
By using the measurements in the step-by-step drawings above and carefully drawing through, you can block in the cat's head in various positions involving turning and foreshortening. Analyze each of these diagrams and see how the construction lines are used to place the features.

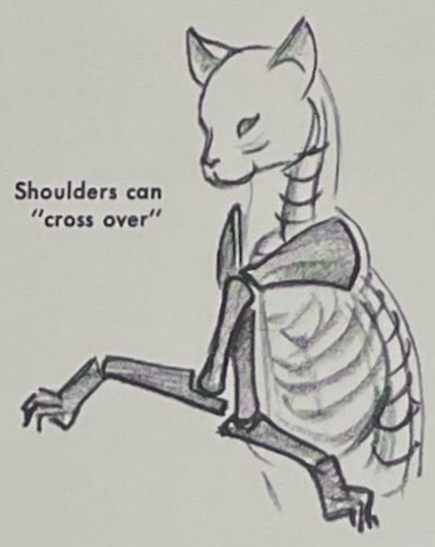


Why the cat is so flexible in its movements

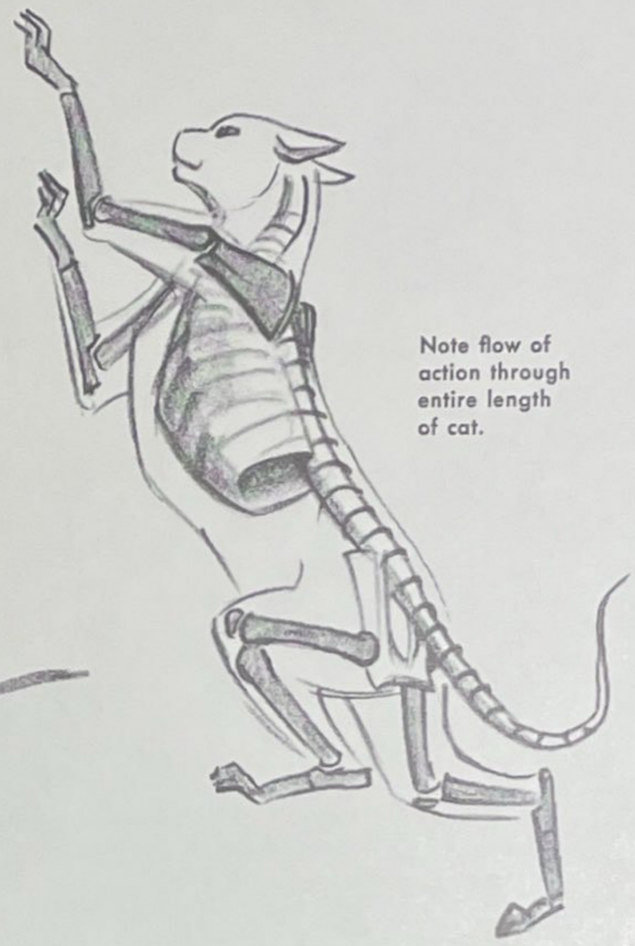
In these diagrams you can see the characteristics of the cat's skeleton which allow it such free movement – its small tapering rib cage, long flexible spine and free-moving shoulder blades and forelegs.

Notice how small the rib cage is at the front. This allows the cat to move its forelegs and shoulder blades almost without restriction – not only forward and backward, but from side to side as well. Because of this feature the cat can climb with great agility, claw at its prey, and creep along in a crouched position.



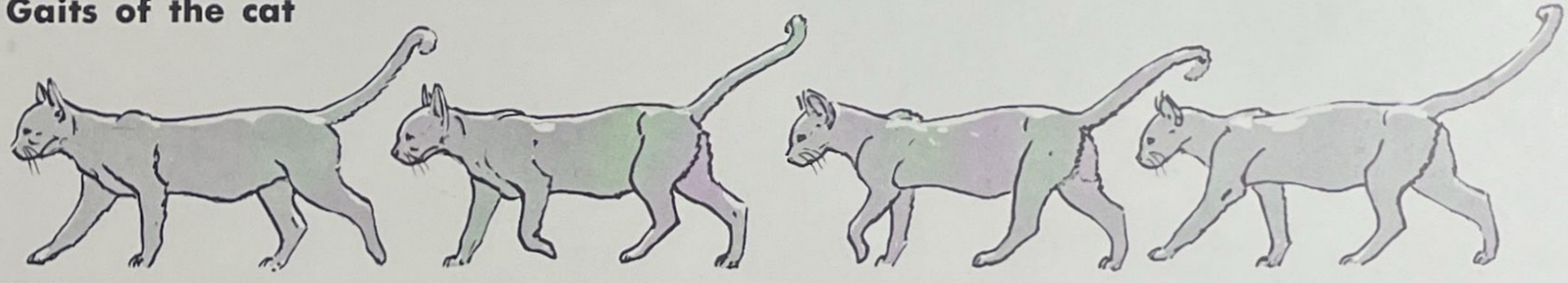


When feet are drawn together in typical "Halloween cat" pose, long spine arches upward.


Note flow of action through entire length of cat.

Crouched, creeping action is typical of cat stalking its prey.

Gaits of the cat



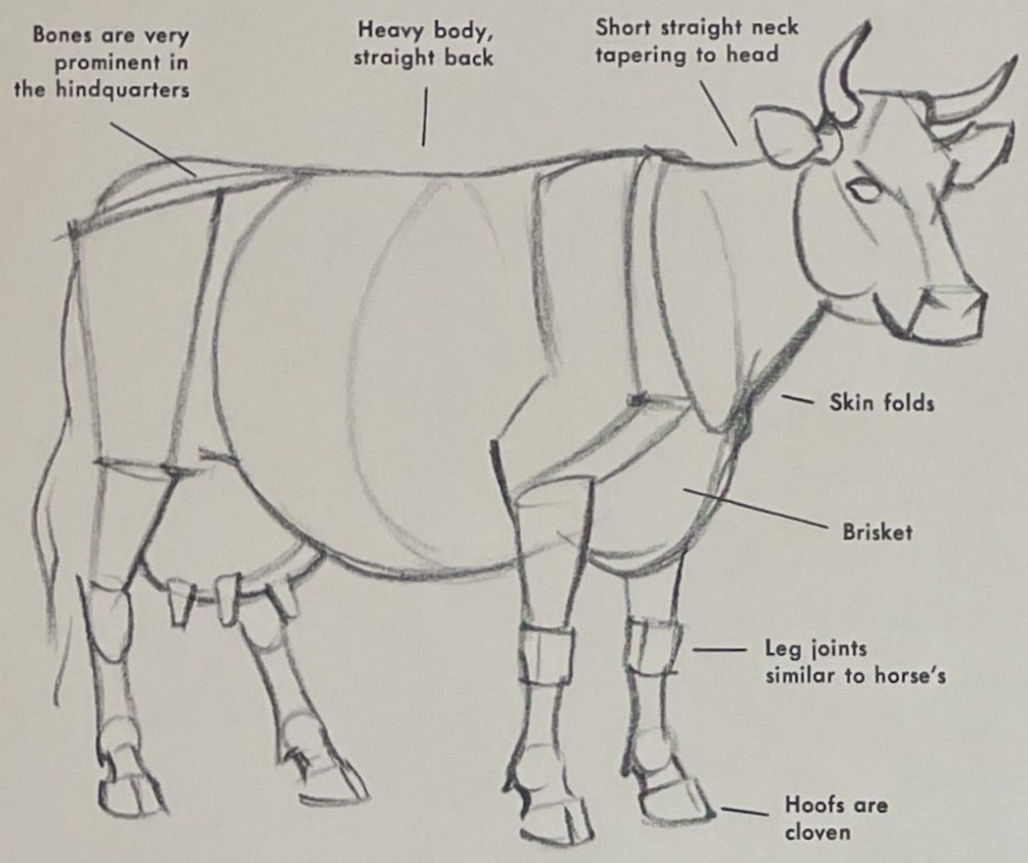
Walk: Just as with the dog and horse, the cat's front paw touches the ground a moment after the corresponding rear paw.

Trot: As with the other animals, the left front and right hind foot are on the ground at the same time, and the right front foot and left hind foot move together.

Gallop: Here you can see the fluid movement of the cat. Note the prominent action of the shoulder blades as alternate feet are lifted.

Gallop – front view: Note rocking movement of body.

Gallop – rear view: Note twisting action of tail.

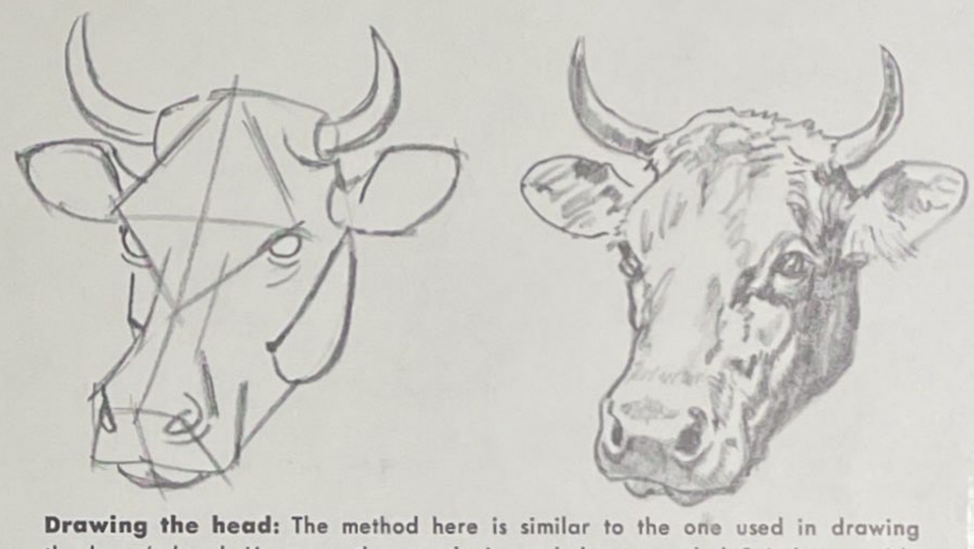

Bones are very prominent in the hindquarters
Heavy body, straight back
Short straight neck tapering to head
Skin folds
Brisket
Leg joints similar to horse's
Hoofs are cloven

To block in the cow: Use the same procedure you did with the horse, changing the proportions as described in the accompanying text.

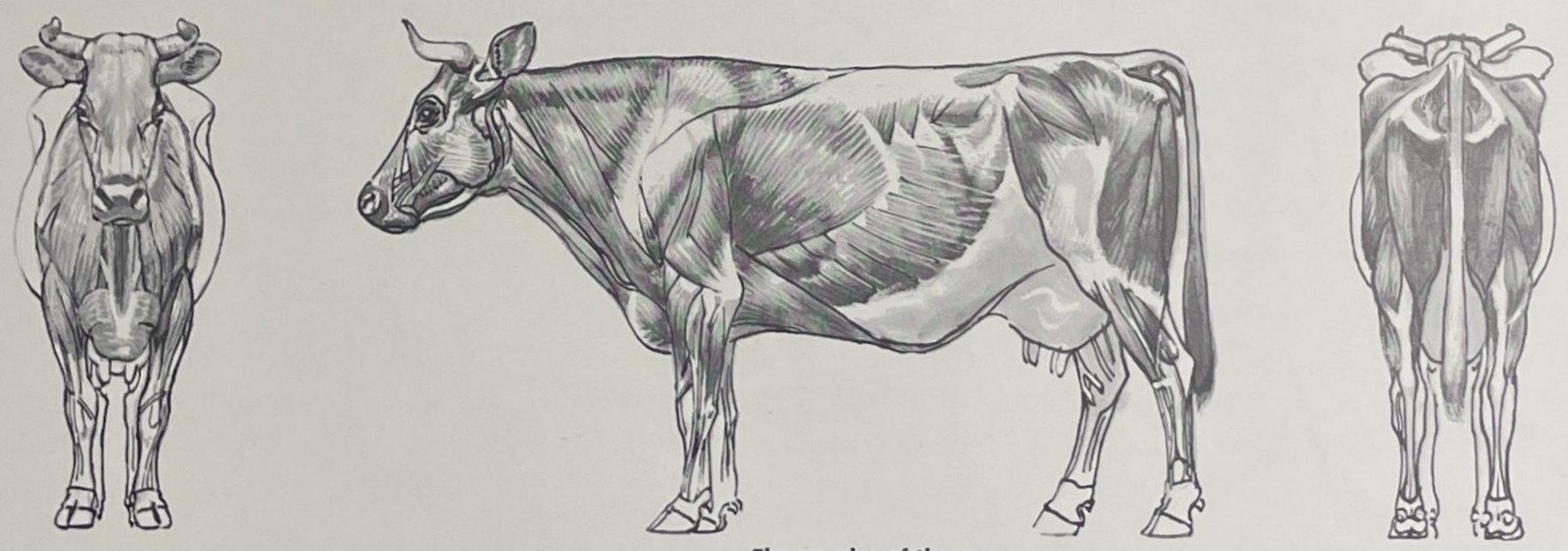
The cow

Whether you want to do a landscape or an illustration for a western story or an advertisement for milk, the cow is a valuable animal to know how to draw. It is certainly not a hard one. Both the head and body can be blocked in very much like those of the horse. The chief differences involve proportions: the cow is longer than the horse in relation to its height, and has shorter legs and a wider, shorter head.

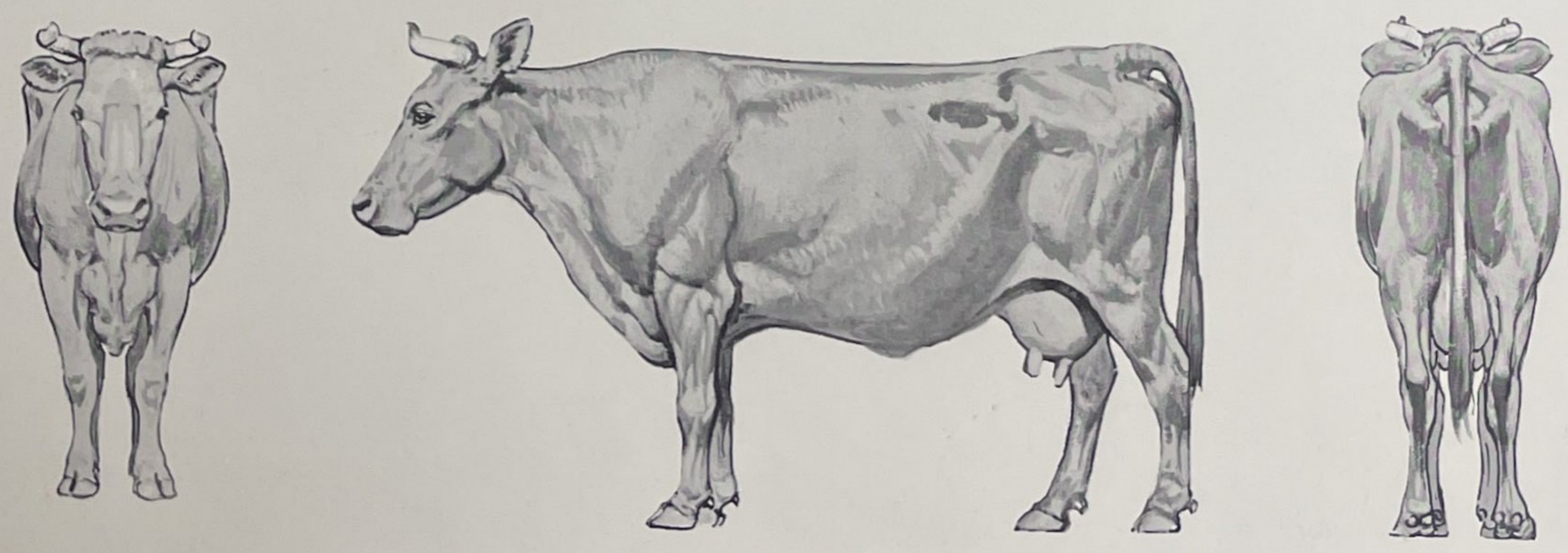
The cow has a short neck, so normally it does not carry its head high. Except when the animal lifts it to express surprise, the head is usually held slightly below the line of the back. The horns grow out of a bony ridge at the top of the skull. Like other members of the ox family, the cow has noticeable skin folds beneath the neck and a brisket.



Drawing the head: The method here is similar to the one used in drawing the horse's head. However, the muzzle is much larger and definitely squarish, and the upper lips hang down at the sides.



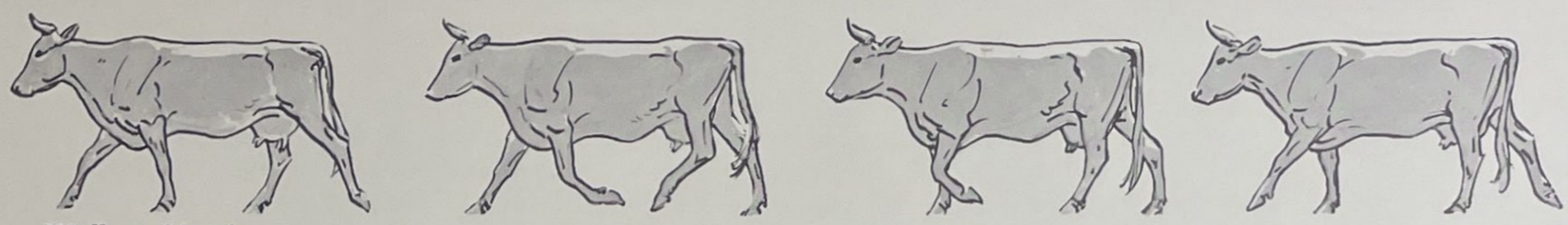
The muscles of the cow



The bony structure is more prominent in the cow than in most other animals.

Gaits of the cow

A study of these charts will show you that the cow does not raise its feet as high as the horse does when walking or running. This is a characteristic to keep in mind when drawing the cow in motion. Sometimes you may wish to exaggerate this action slightly. If you draw a cow with its feet as high as a trotter's, you will have a gay, perky-looking animal.



Walk — side view

Walk — front view

Walk — rear view

Trot

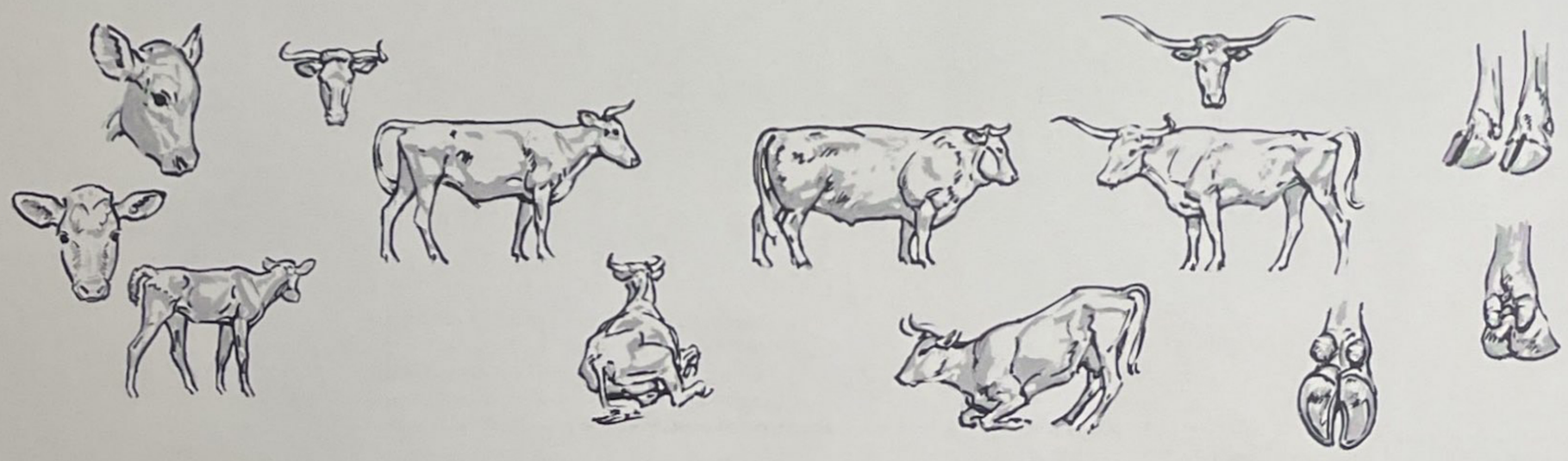
Gallop — side view

Gallop — front view

Gallop — rear view

You learn to draw by drawing

Sketch from life whenever you can. Cattle are ideal subjects, as they move around less than most other animals. If live cattle are not available, draw those you see in photographs in magazines and books and on television. Note the differences in various types of cattle. The calf has a small body and long legs — the bull is sturdy and compact. Draw the animals in all positions — grazing, lying down, getting up. Make studies of details like heads and hoofs. See — observe — remember.



Getting acquainted with the animal kingdom

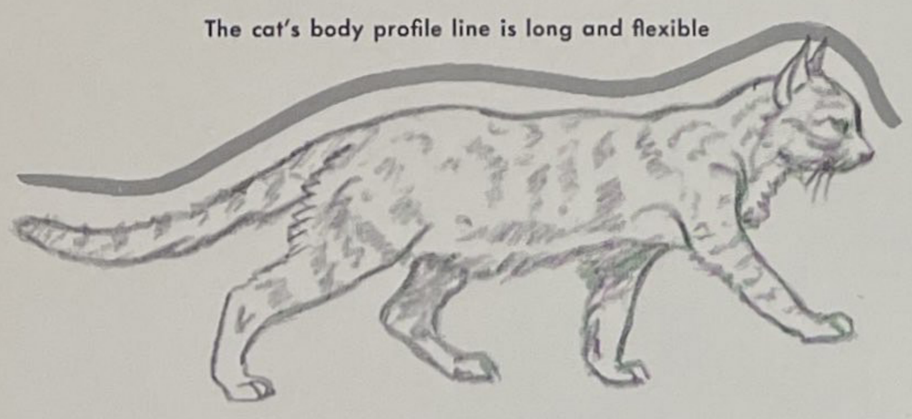
So far in this section we have concentrated on learning how to draw four basic animals – the horse, dog, cat, and cow. Now you will see how to use your knowledge of these four animals to draw a wide range of other animals – the deer, fox, giraffe, lion, or even such creatures as alligators and seals.

Most of these other animals resemble one of our basic four. For example, the deer is similar to the horse, the fox is like the dog, the lion is really a big cat. Therefore, to start, we will set up four basic groups, one for each of our four basic animals, and place in each group the animals most like the basic one. This grouping is not scientific, but it will show you how to analyze the physical appearance and action of an animal – to use what you know of the basic animal to draw others that are like it.

No grouping or analysis of different types, no matter how helpful it may be, can ever take the place of careful, intelligent observation and research. Every kind of animal has its unique features, and you will need to study your animals in life and in reference pictures. What we show you here is the key to understanding the animals so you can draw them convincingly, even in positions that are not pictured in your scrap file or encyclopedia, or books about animals.

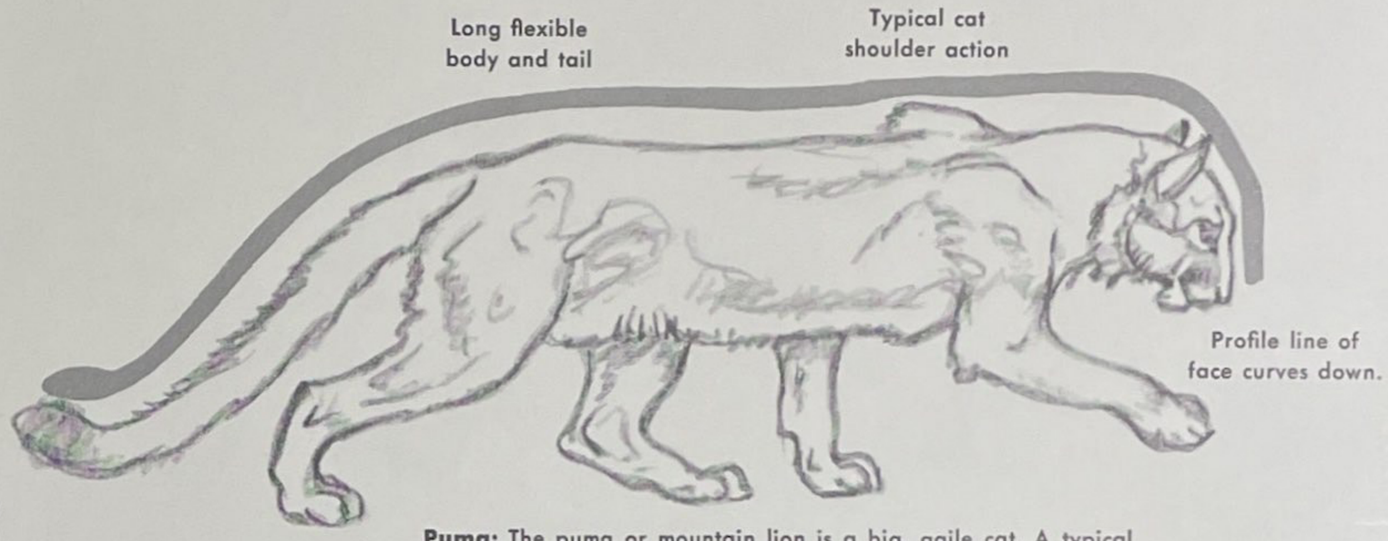
When you study an animal, take particular note of the profile line of its body and of its head. This will help you to get down the animal's characteristic shape quickly. Here we show these lines in gray. The features we point out are the type of detail you must train yourself to look for.

One further point: when you draw an animal, don't concentrate merely on its outward appearance. Try to understand its structure and its personality, too – why it moves and behaves the way it does. This approach will help you not only to draw the animal accurately, but to capture its character and spirit as a unique living thing.

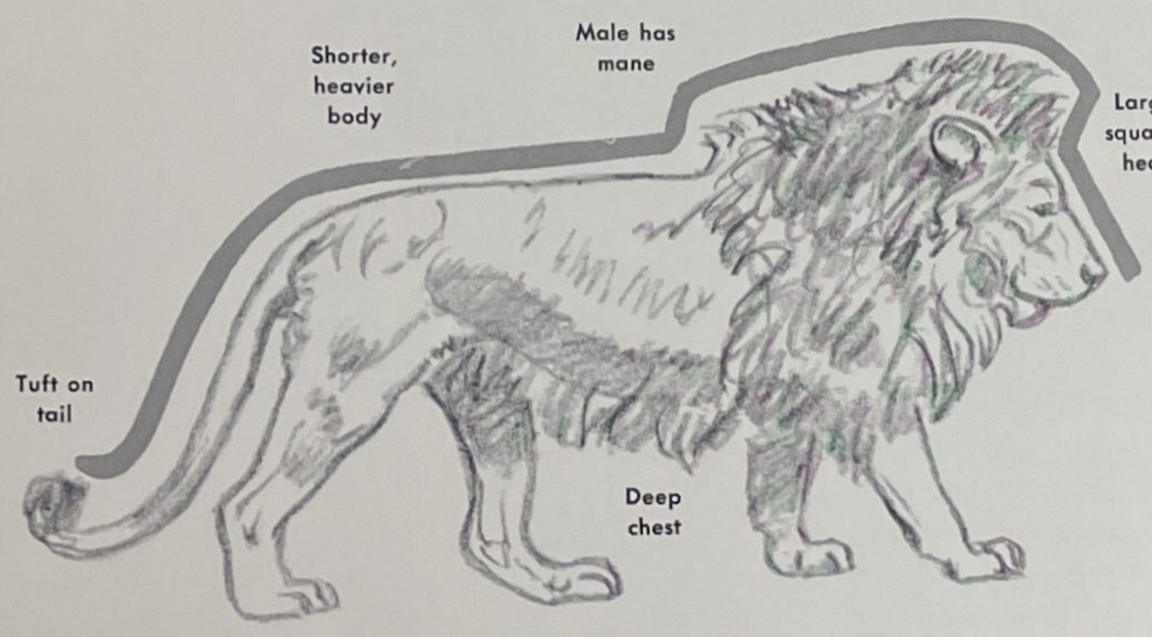


Cat group

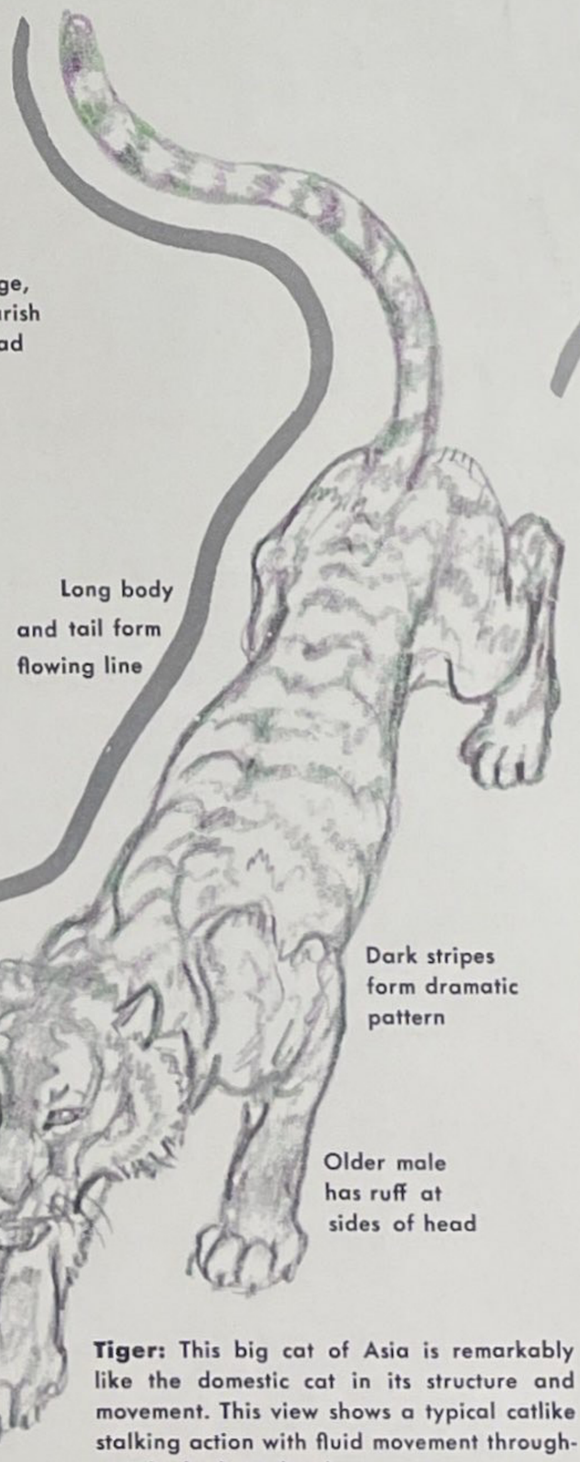
The animals in this group are the real hunters of the animal kingdom. They are well equipped for the hunt – they have knifelike teeth and powerful front legs, armed with sharp claws which they can extend or draw in at will. Stealth, surprise attack, and, except for the lion, concealment are their native habits. With their long, flexible bodies, no wider at any point than the head, they pass through any opening the head can enter. Their back paws step just where their front paws have been, enabling them to pick their way on their padded feet through the underbrush as soundlessly as a shadow. There are many small animals such as the otter, weasel, and skunk that are not really cats but are similar in structure, and your knowledge of cats will help you draw them.



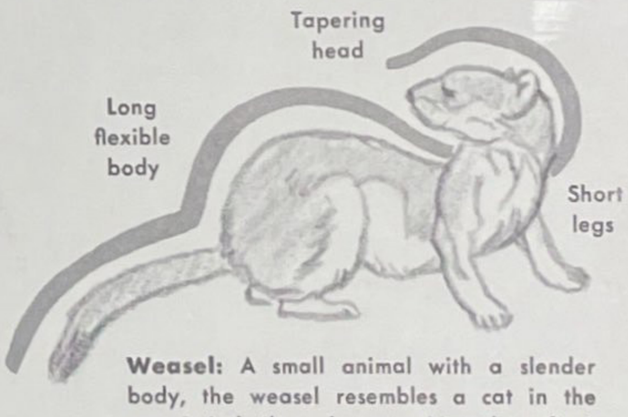
Puma: The puma or mountain lion is a big, agile cat. A typical hunter, it stalks its prey, then springs into action, attacking with its powerful forelegs and teeth.



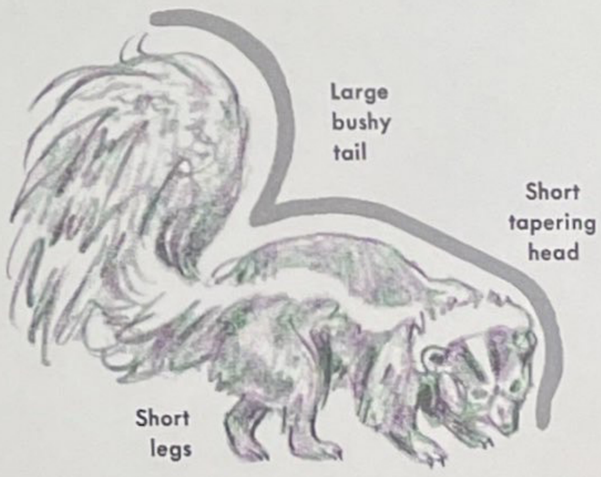
Lion: The "king of the beasts" does not crouch so much nor is it so secretive in its ways as other cats. It is very powerful – a slap from its forepaw will break a zebra's neck. The mane is present only in adult males.



Tiger: This big cat of Asia is remarkably like the domestic cat in its structure and movement. This view shows a typical catlike stalking action with fluid movement throughout the body and tail.

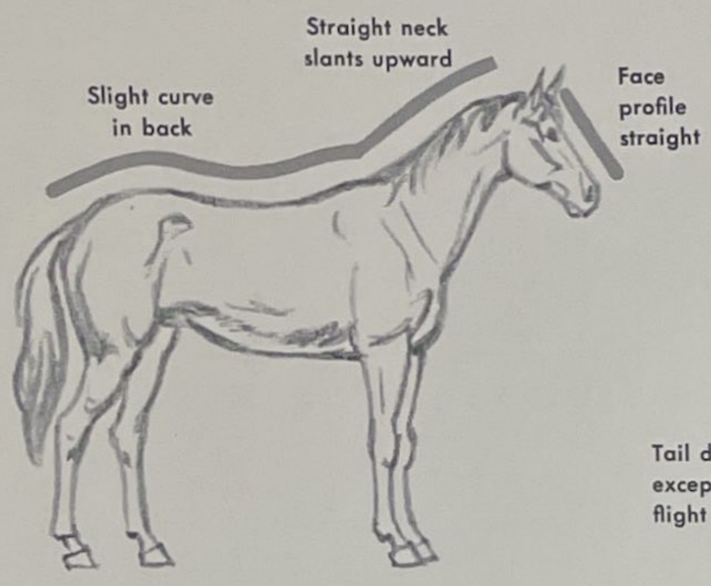


Weasel: A small animal with a slender body, the weasel resembles a cat in the way it is built and moves. Note how flexible its entire body is – how the back arches up and the body twists around.



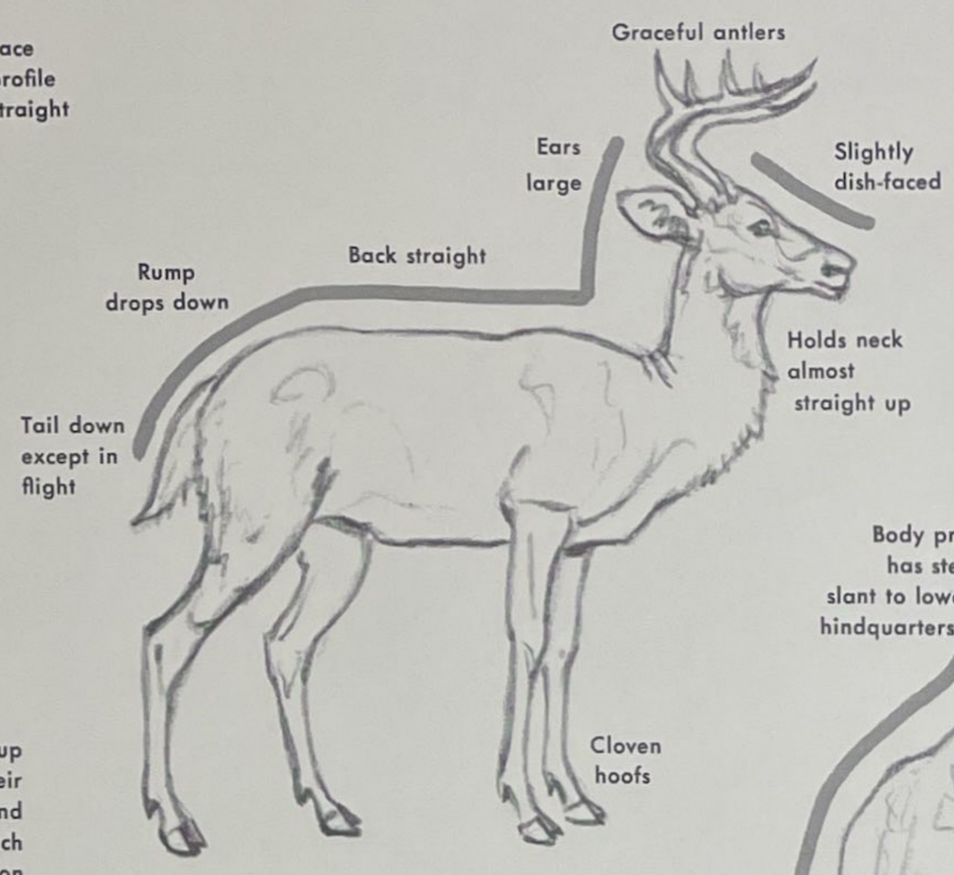
Skunk: Note the curved back, bushy tail, and tapering muzzle. Although not every skunk has stripes, showing stripes in your drawing helps to identify the animal.

Lynx: This cat, with its short body and long rear legs, is less graceful than most others. Its large feet are useful on snow.

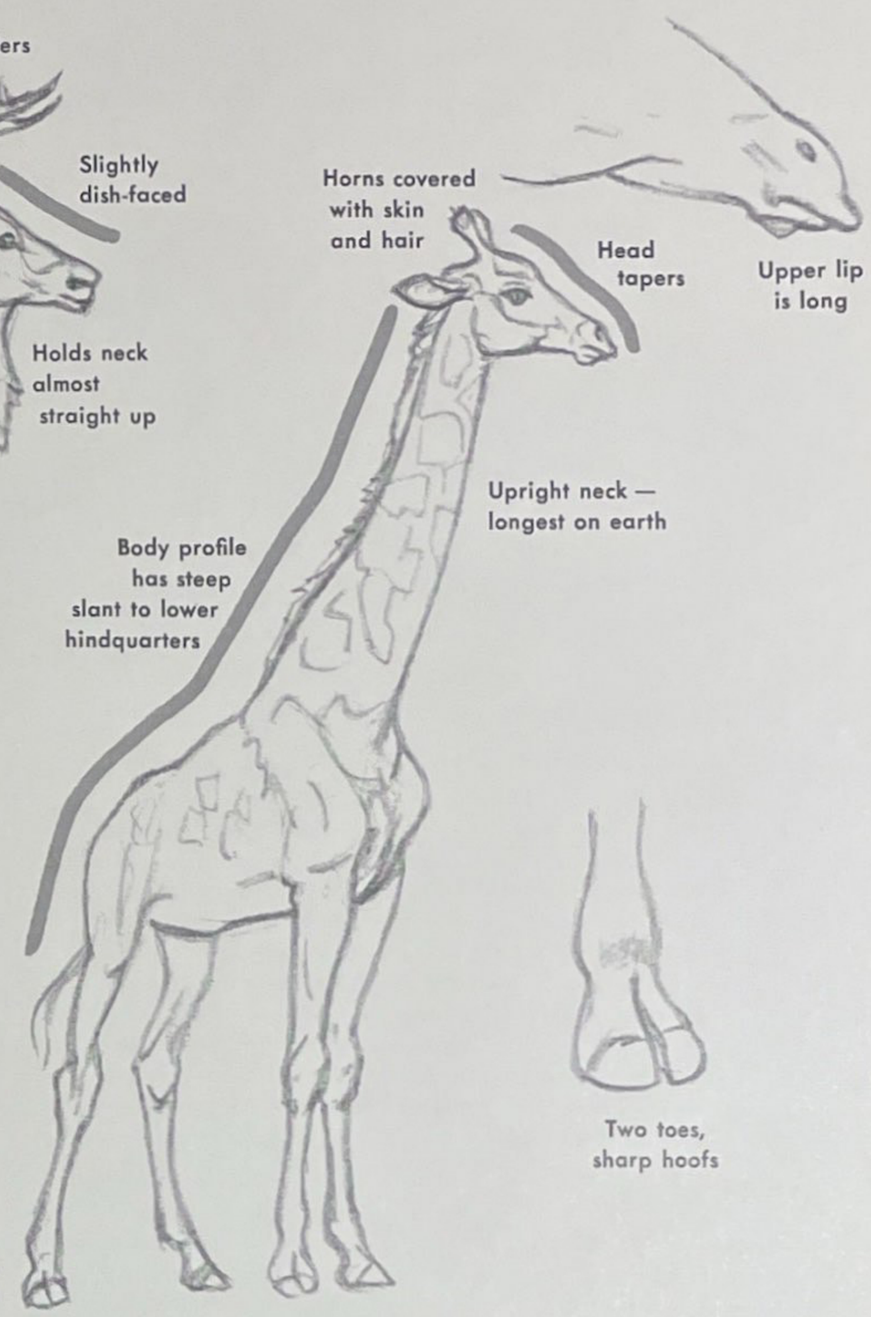


Horse group

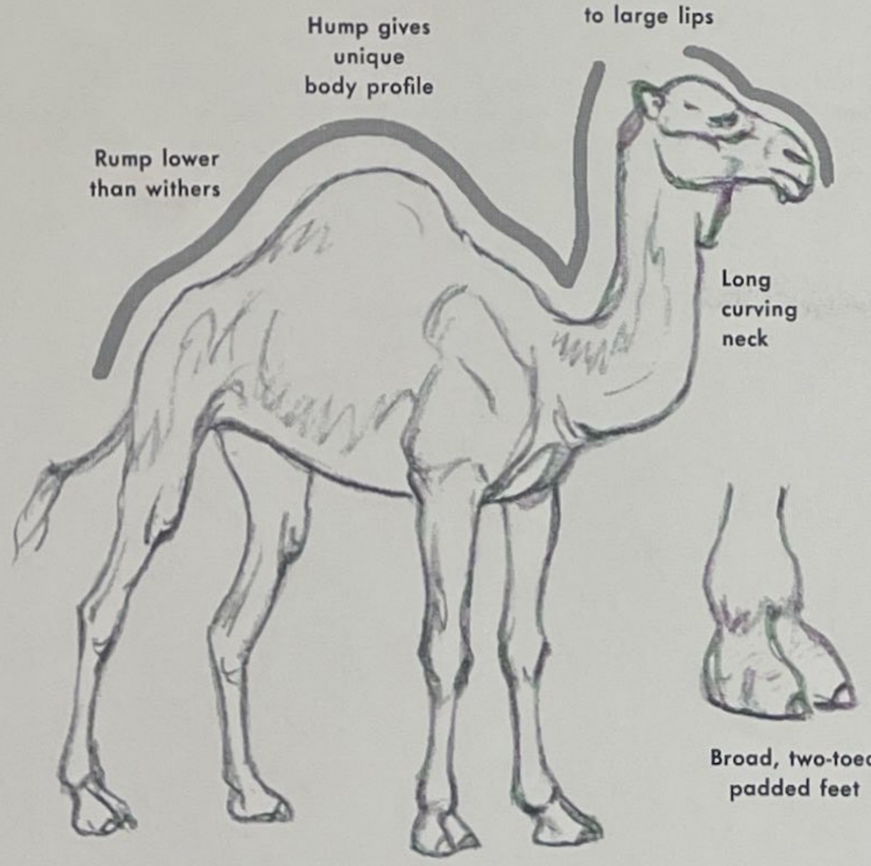
Grazing animals with long legs, the creatures in this group are built to travel great distances in search of food. Their heads are long and equipped with teeth that can grind the foliage, grass, and grain they eat. Note how much alike these animals are in shoulder and hip construction and also that their legs are thin, bony, and jointed just like those of the horse.



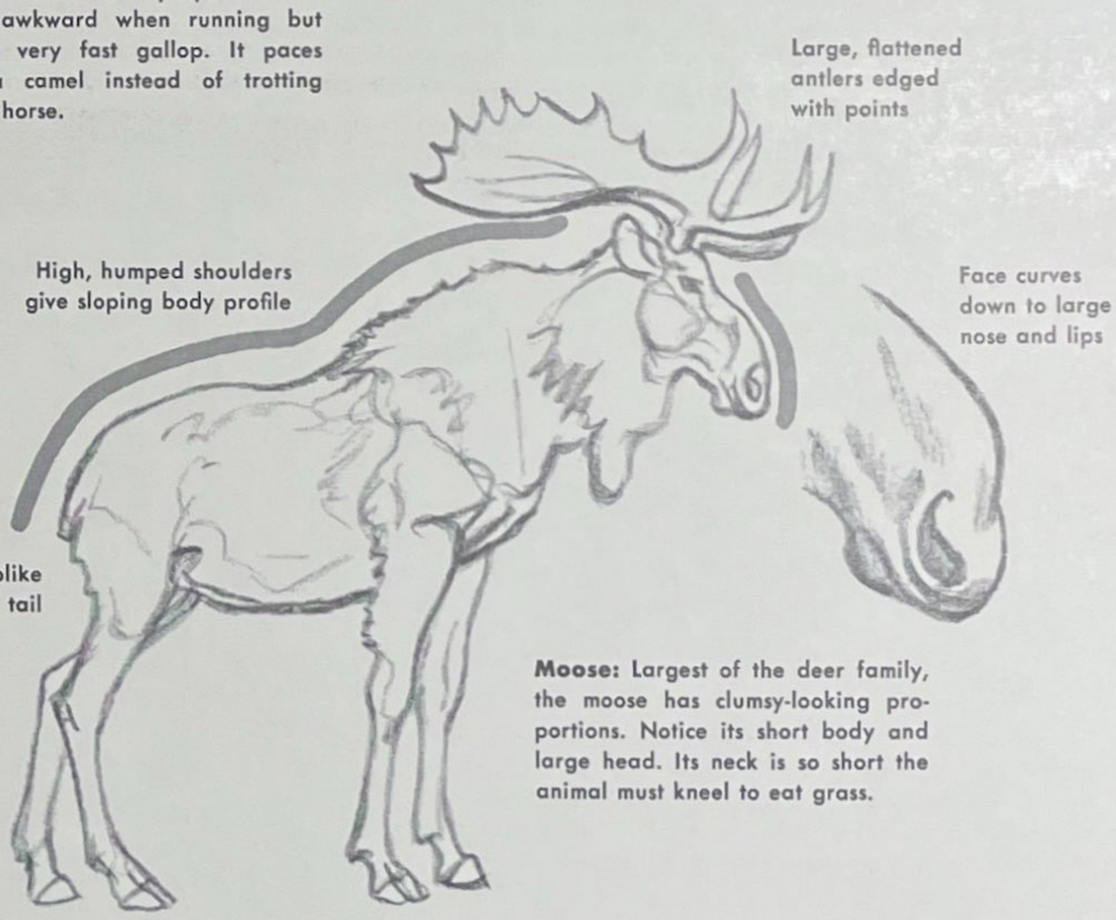
Deer: This typical pose tells us much about the nature of the deer. The animal holds its head high, alert for danger, its strong rear legs ready to propel it into instant flight. Usually only the male has horns, which it sheds and renews each year. The species shown is the Virginia or white-tailed deer, a common American kind.


Horns covered with skin and hair
Head tapers
Upper lip is long
Upright neck — longest on earth
Body profile has steep slant to lower hindquarters
Two toes, sharp hoofs

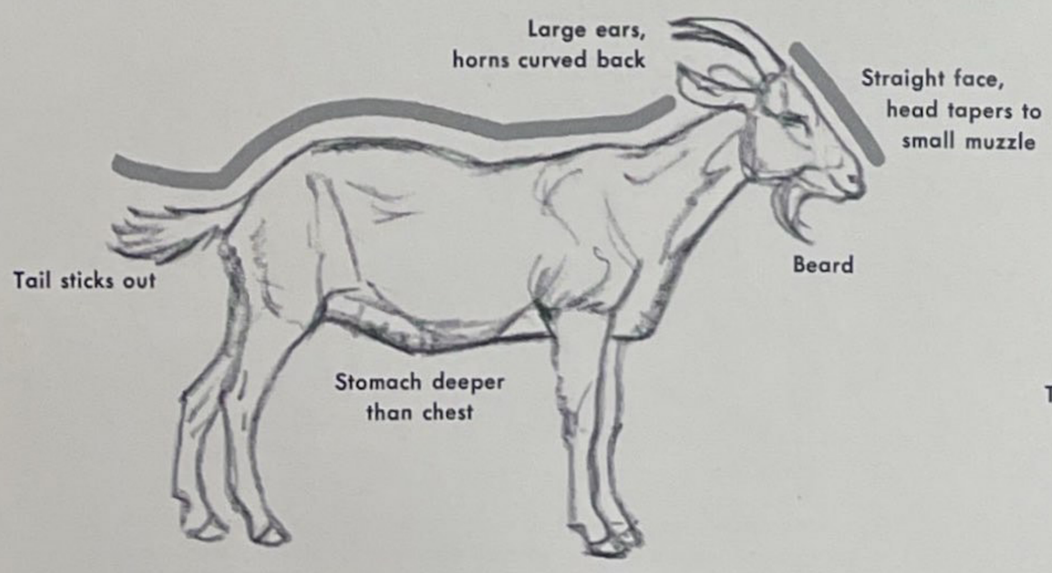
Giraffe: With its long neck and legs and its short body, the giraffe is a real caricature in proportions. It looks awkward when running but has a very fast gallop. It paces like a camel instead of trotting like a horse.


Face curves down to large lips
Hump gives unique body profile
Rump lower than withers
Long curving neck
Broad, two-toed padded feet

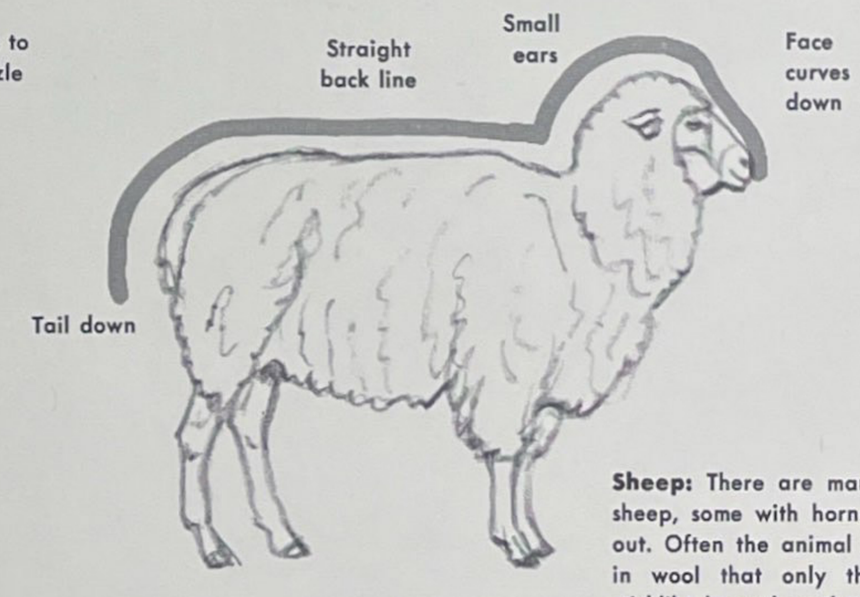
Camel: With its long knobby legs and broad, padded feet, the camel appears built for desert travel. It has a haughty, superior look. The animal we show you here is the Arabian camel, which has one hump. The Bactrian camel has two humps and is heavier.


Large, flattened antlers edged with points
High, humped shoulders give sloping body profile
Face curves down to large nose and lips
Stumplike tail

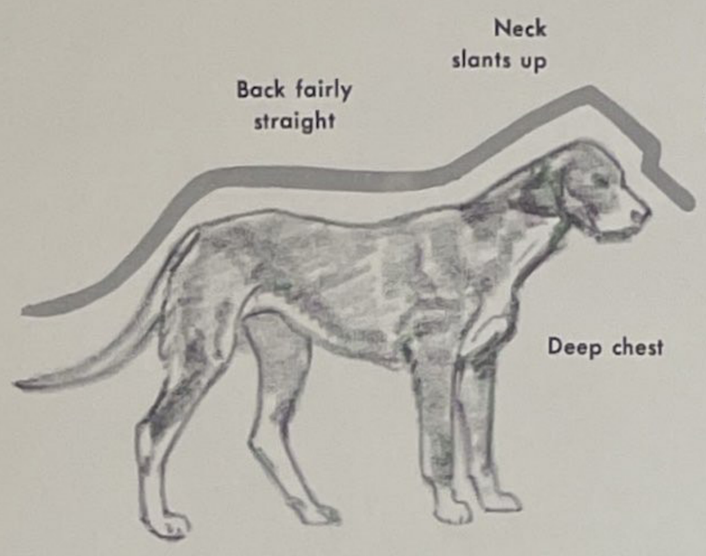
Moose: Largest of the deer family, the moose has clumsy-looking proportions. Notice its short body and large head. Its neck is so short the animal must kneel to eat grass.



Goat: This animal is much like the horse in shape, except for the heavy rear half.



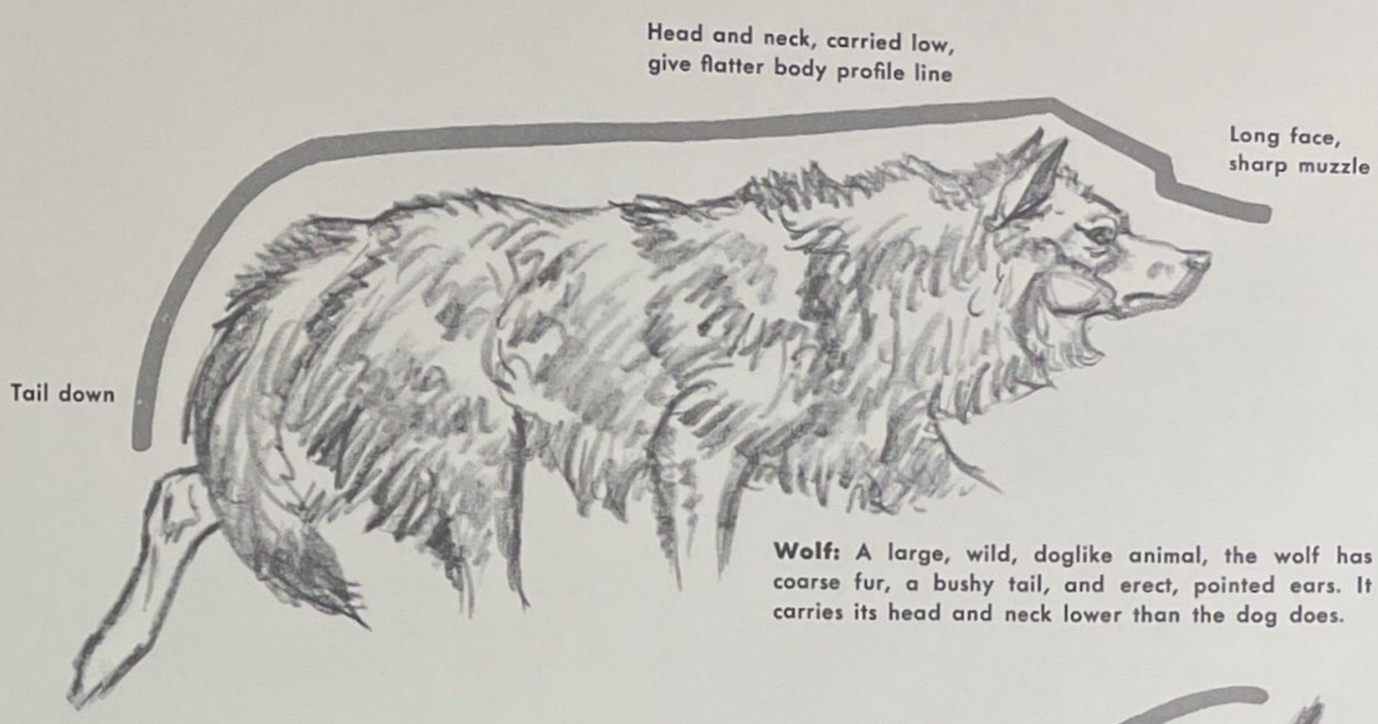
Sheep: There are many breeds of sheep, some with horns, some without. Often the animal is so clothed in wool that only the face and sticklike lower legs show.



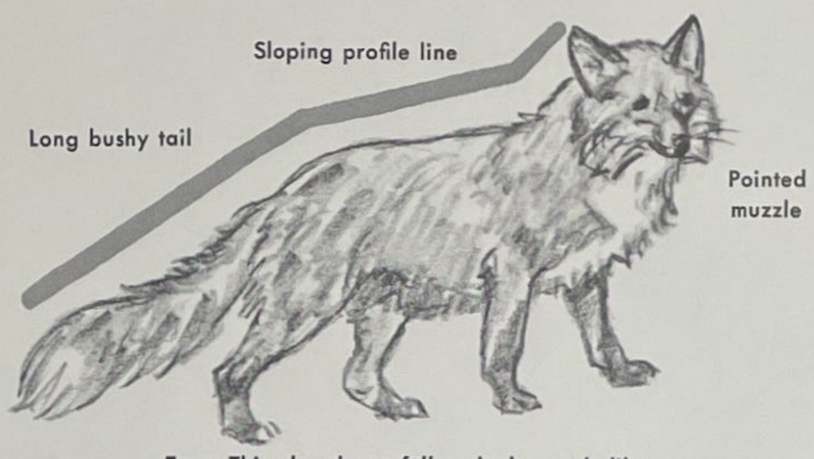
Dog group

Animals like the wolf, fox, hyena, and coyote show a marked resemblance to the dog. All are meat eaters and follow their prey through their keen sense of smell. Their long legs and good lung capacity meet the two prime demands of the chase — speed and endurance. They strike with teeth and strong jaws, their forepaws having almost no part in making the kill.

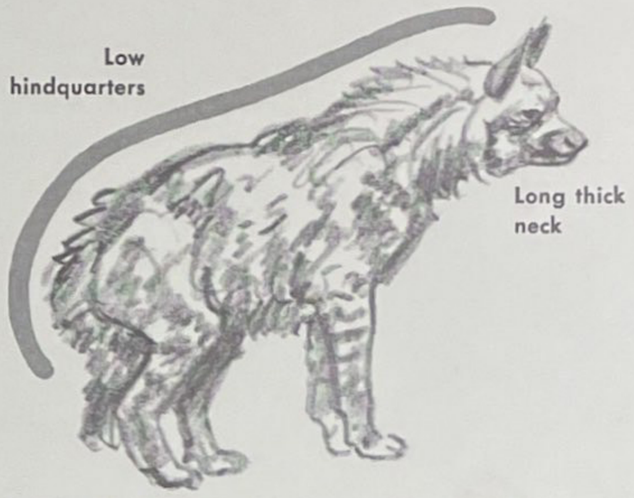
Although, as we have mentioned before, different types of dogs vary considerably, we are again using the "average" dog here as a standard for comparison. On the dog shown above, note the square proportion of body and legs, the deep chest, and the step-down at the brow. These shapes give a "doglike" look.



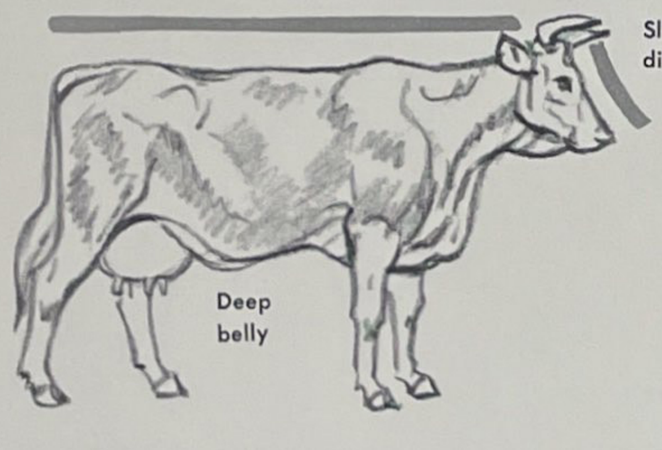
Wolf: A large, wild, doglike animal, the wolf has coarse fur, a bushy tail, and erect, pointed ears. It carries its head and neck lower than the dog does.



Fox: This sly, clever fellow looks much like a long-haired dog. The fox is smaller than the wolf and has triangular ears that remind us of the cat's.

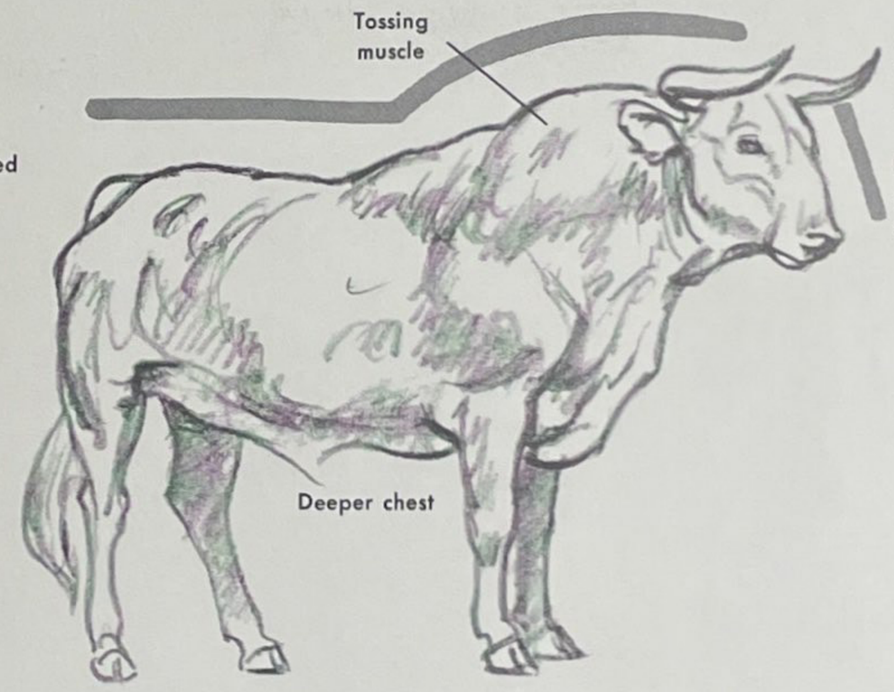


Hyena: This repulsive creature is not actually kin to a dog but resembles it in basic structure. A notable difference is in the short rear legs, which give the animal its unusual body profile. Its coat is rough.

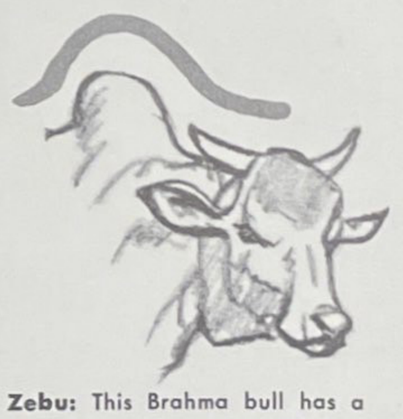


Cow group

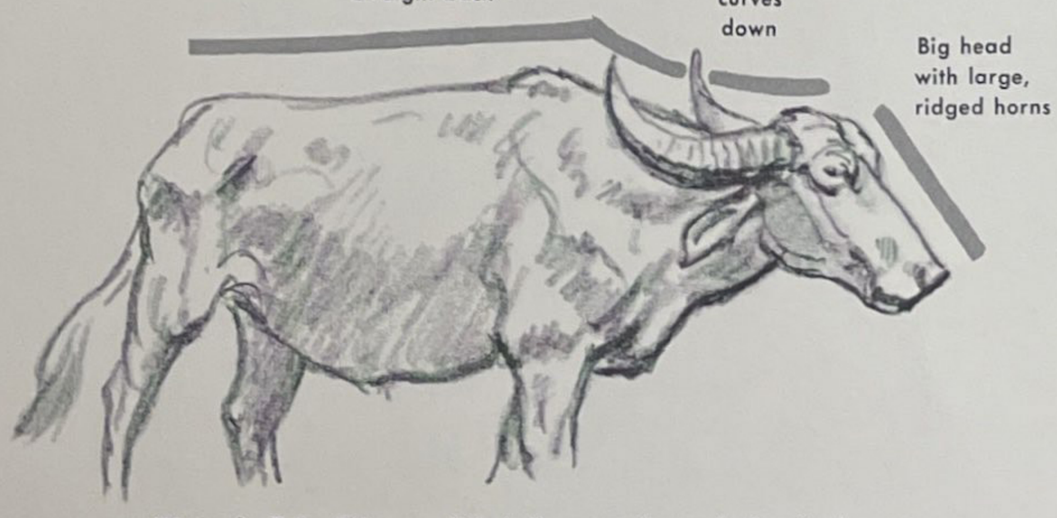
Like the horse group, these animals are grazers. Physically, there is much resemblance, too. The main difference is in the shorter legs and heavier bodies, which give the animals less mobility. From type to type, there is great variation in the form of the horns.



Bull: Seemingly built for attack, the bull has massive shoulder and neck muscles. Compare it with the cow. Notice how bulky the bull is toward the front — while the cow, with its deep belly, is bulky toward the rear.



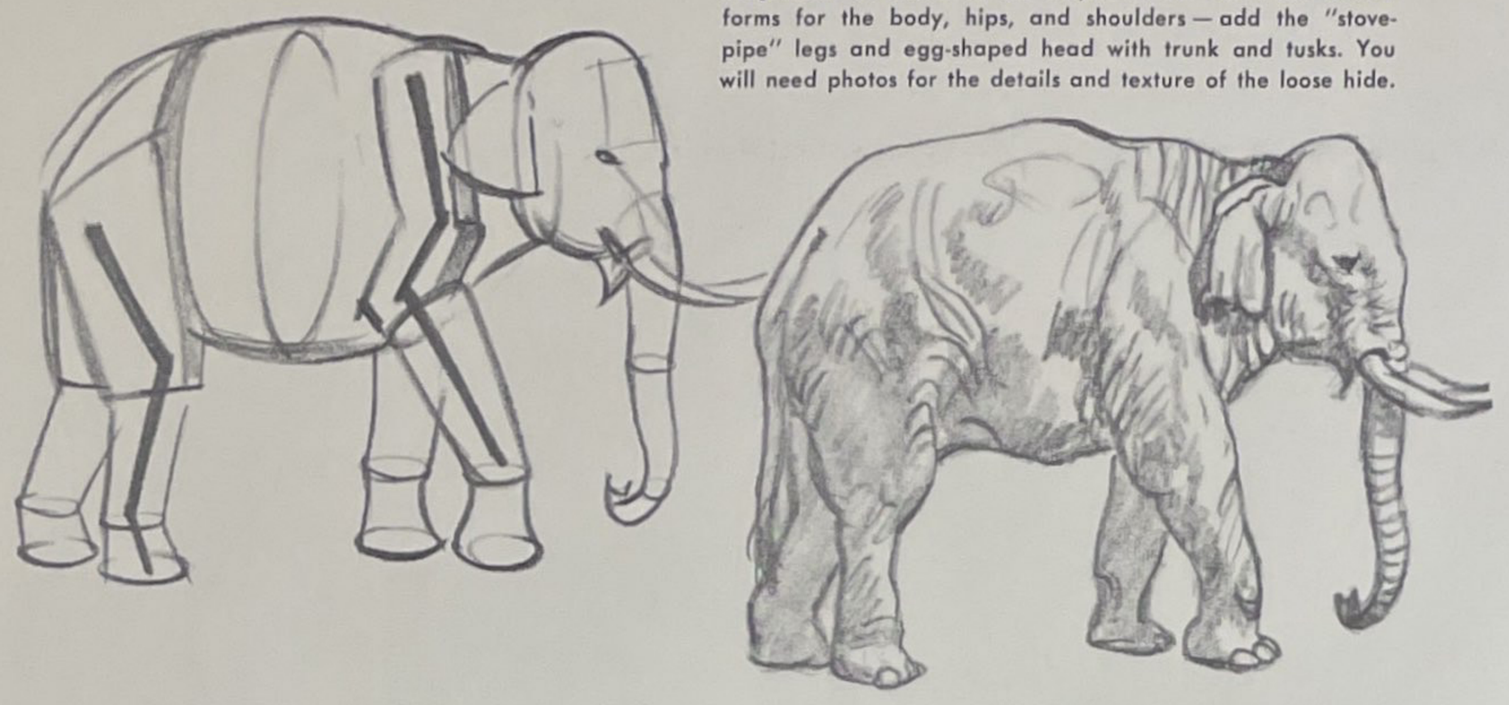
Zebu: This Brahma bull has a large hump above the shoulders.



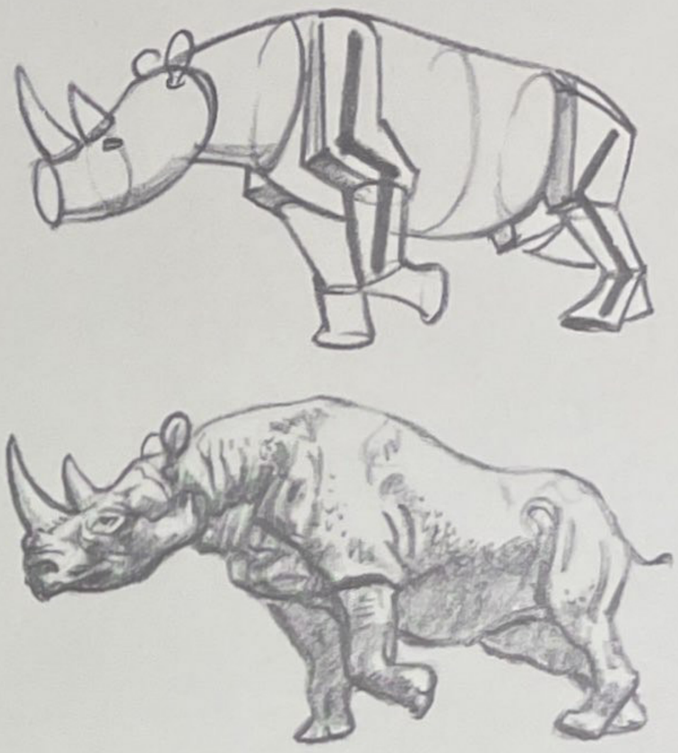
Water buffalo: This powerfully built ox, used as a draft animal in Asia, is quite similar in structure to the cow and bull but is bigger. Its large head seems weighed down by its big horns.

Horns

The variety of horns in this group and the sheep and goats is almost limitless. Some horns are curving, others are twisted, spiral, or straight. Here we see the magnificent spiral horns of the Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep contrasted with the musk ox's broad-based horns, which curve down along its jaws. The horns are often the most distinguishing characteristic of the animal.



Elephant: To block in the elephant, use the basic animal forms for the body, hips, and shoulders — add the "stove-pipe" legs and egg-shaped head with trunk and tusks. You will need photos for the details and texture of the loose hide.



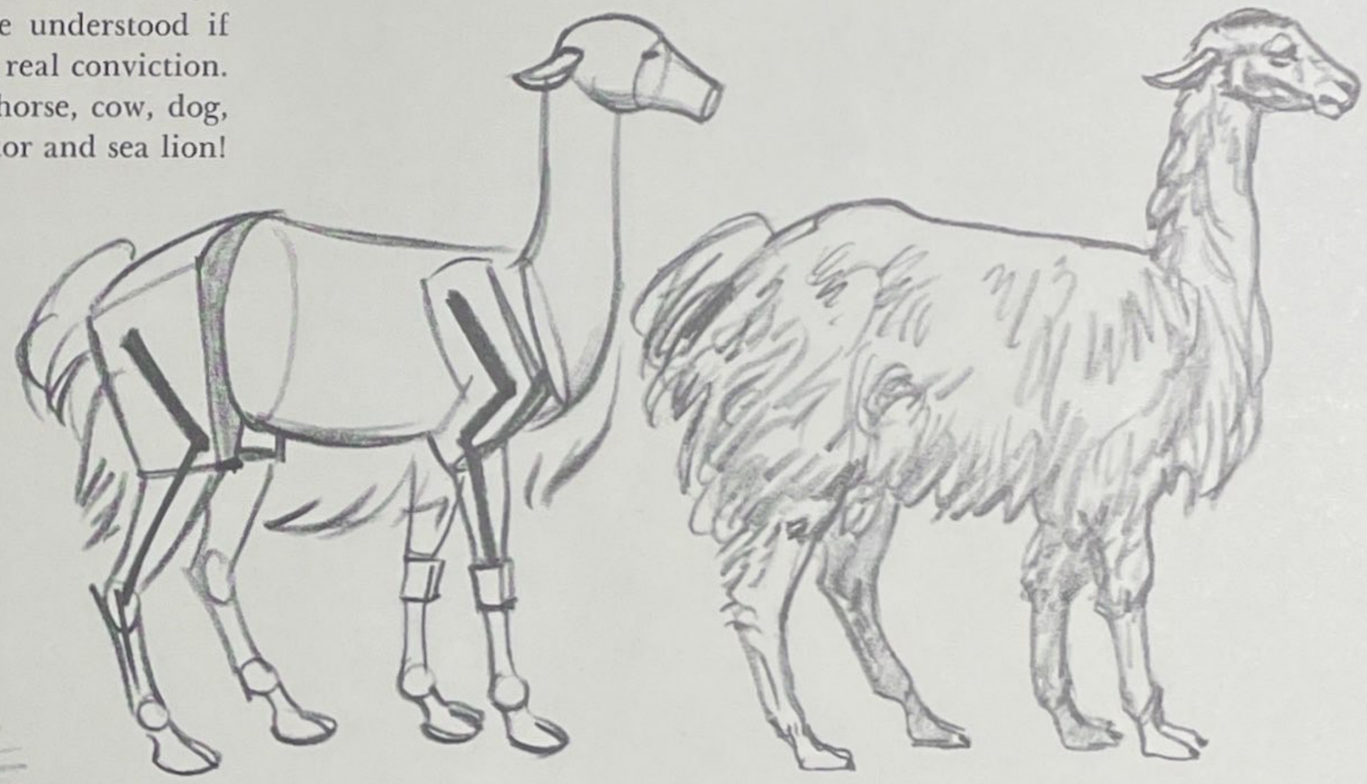
Rhinoceros: Although different in proportions, the rhino is similar to the elephant in most of its basic forms. Its legs seem quite stubby, but the animal trots and gallops much like a horse.

Don't let hide or hair fool you!

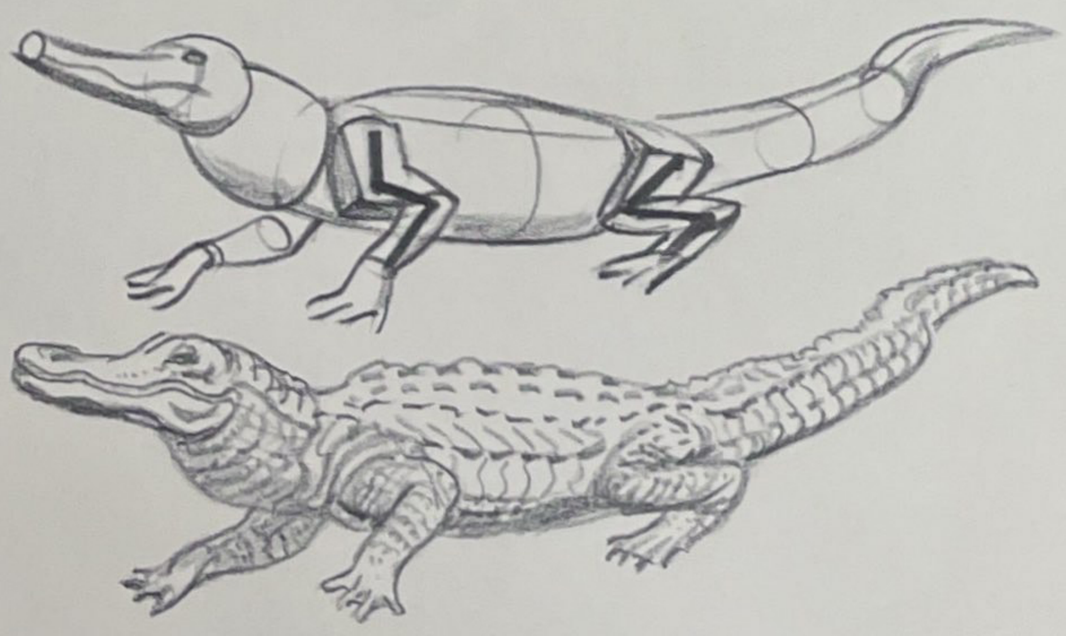
Although many of these animals would be difficult to fit into our four groups, all are basically similar to them in their bone and muscle framework. Your knowledge of the four basic animal groups will help you draw these animals, even though some are covered with heavy hide, like the hippo and rhino, or with quills, like the porcupine, or with long hair, like the llama.

Whenever you draw an animal, besides considering its outside appearance, pay attention to the way the shoulder blades and leg bones work. (We have indicated these with black lines on the diagrams.) This action, which is much the same for all animals, controls their movement and must be understood if your drawing is to have a sense of life and carry real conviction. See how the same basic forms we used for the horse, cow, dog, and cat are used here to block in even the alligator and sea lion!

Porcupine: The basic forms will help you draw even the strange-looking porcupine. Use them to establish the correct leg action under the mass of quills.



Llama: Under its long hair the llama is much like the horse and camel in basic structure. It also has padded, two-toed feet like the camel.



Alligator: All of the basic forms are lengthened in the alligator, except the short legs. Notice how clearly we see the shoulder, elbow, wrist, and knee joints and the webbed fingers and toes.

Sea lion: A close look shows that the sea lion, like other seals and walruses, has much the same basic structure as the land animals, although its "hands" and "feet" are webbed.

Courtesy True Magazine

The fighting bull of Spain is a symbol of death. In him are contrasted strength and beauty of movement — and dark menace.

The mysterious, almost hypnotic stare of the tiger is forcefully expressed here.

Courtesy True Magazine

As this splendid bull elk bugles his ringing challenge, we sense his strong, muscular maleness — his readiness to meet all comers.

Animal pictures with real meaning

Pictures of animals can stir many of the same emotions in us that pictures of people do. Often the impact of the animal is stronger. From the childhood moment when we are first amused by a kitten's high-spirited attack on a ball of yarn – awed by the towering gray bulk of an elephant at the zoo – or terrified by the wolf in "Little Red Riding Hood" – animals take on a deep, inner meaning for us. They become symbols, strongly charged with the electricity of the emotions.

Study the illustrations here and see how the artists use animals as emotional symbols to create a response in the viewer. Notice, too, how clearly these artists express the personality or feelings of the animal itself. Don't merely catalog factual details when you draw and paint animals – you must respond to them emotionally and communicate their emotions to the viewer to bring your animals to life.

Courtesy True Magazine

A dark, looming mass of awesome strength — that is how this Alaskan brown bear is pictured by the artist. At the same time he has skillfully caught the intent, dog-like look of the animal.

When man matches his skill and muscle against the stronger, faster animals the action is swift and dramatic — as we see in the exciting, explosive shapes of these rodeo scenes.

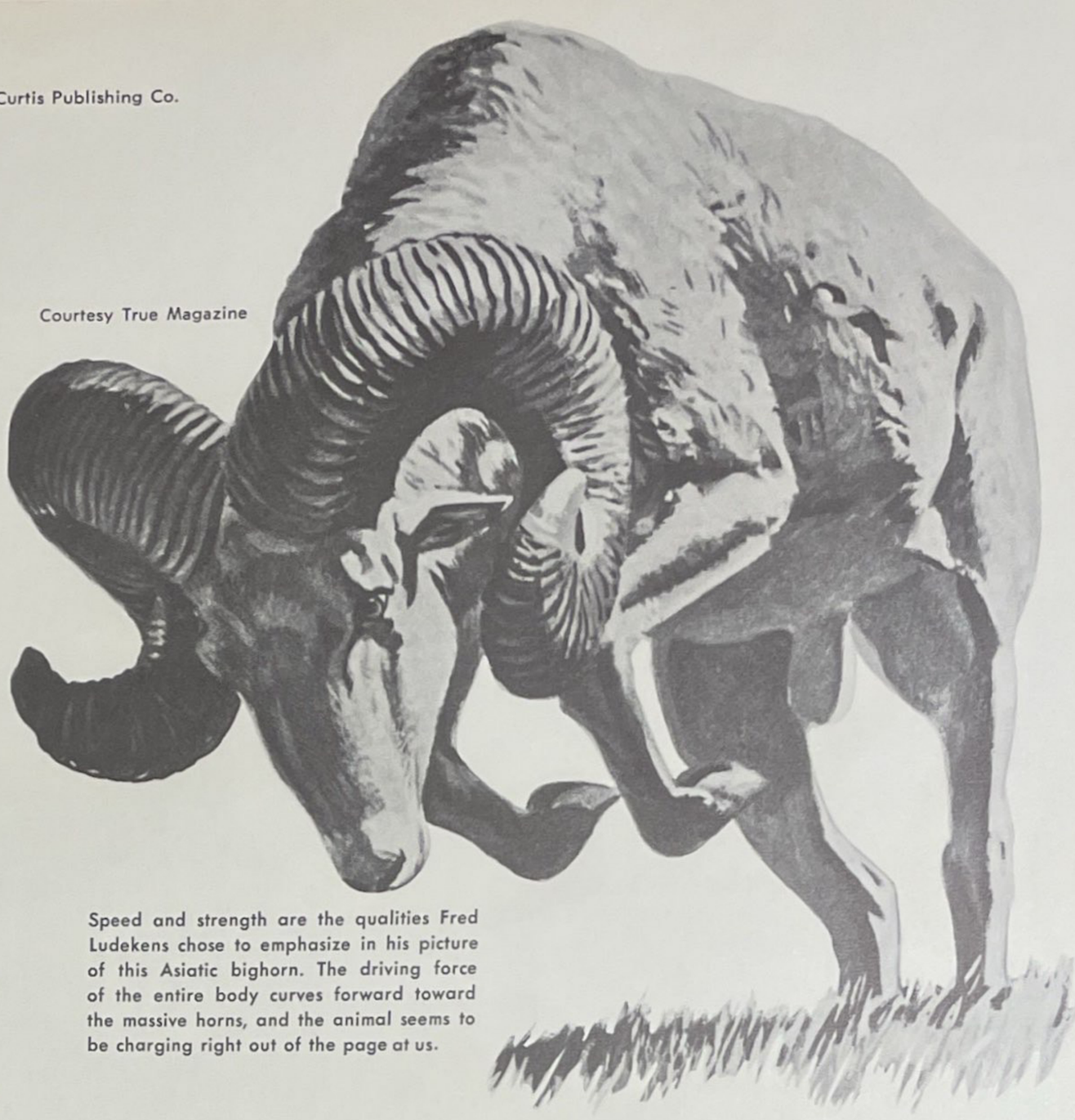
Courtesy Blue Bell, Inc.

Illustrations on this page by Fred Ludekens

The character of the horse — spirited and energetic, yet obedient — is beautifully captured in this illustration by Harold Von Schmidt.

© The Curtis Publishing Co.

Courtesy True Magazine

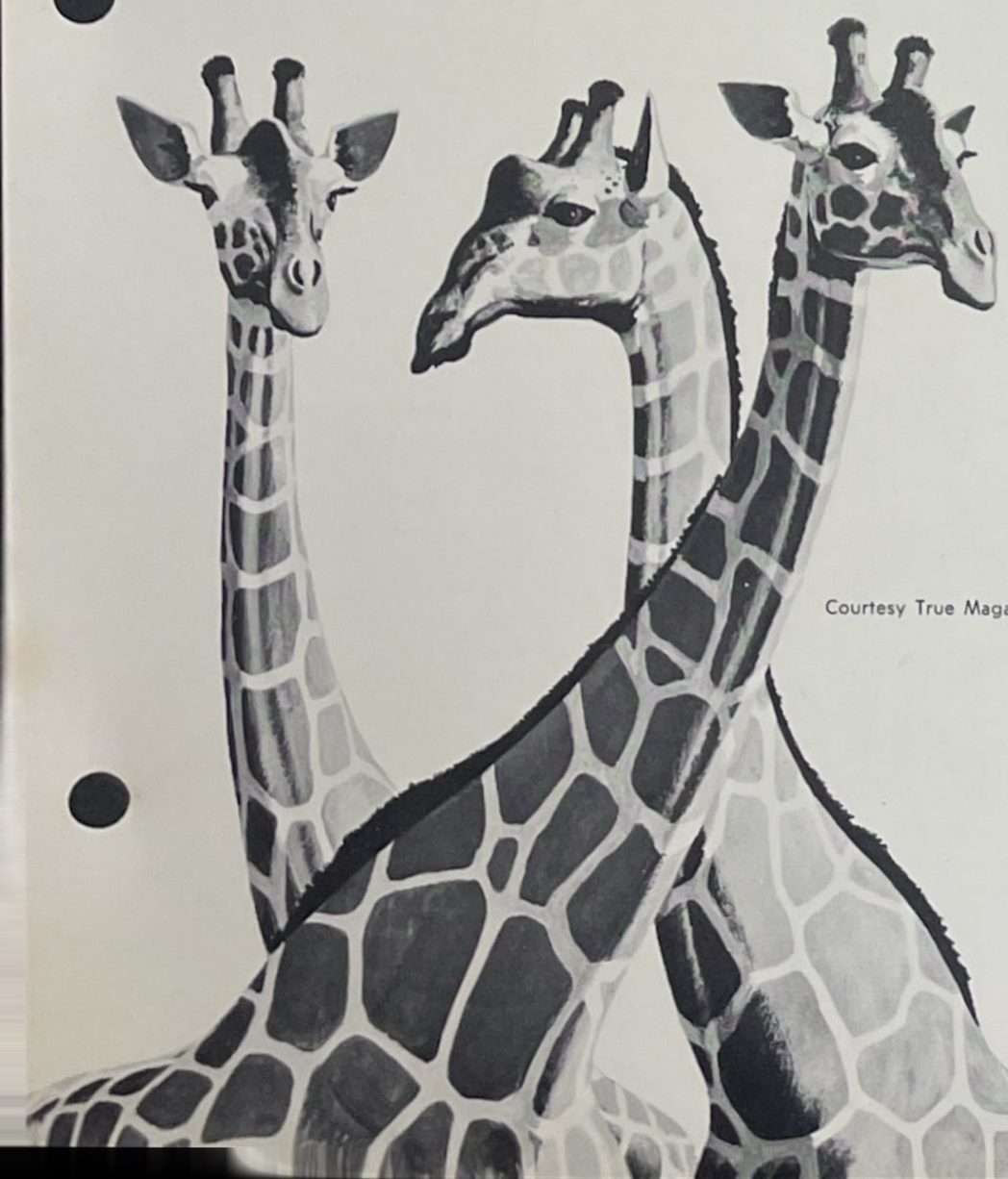


Speed and strength are the qualities Fred Ludekens chose to emphasize in his picture of this Asiatic bighorn. The driving force of the entire body curves forward toward the massive horns, and the animal seems to be charging right out of the page at us.

Courtesy True Magazine

This female polar bear symbolizes mother love as she stands protectively over her two cubs and sniffs the cold air for signs of danger or food in this Ludekens painting.

Harold Von Schmidt communicates dramatically the tensions of man, beast and nature in this painting of cowboys rounding up cattle before an approaching storm.



Courtesy True Magazine

This lordly lion, painted by Fred Ludekens, is very much the classic symbol of unchallenged superiority.

Here Ludekens uses the exotic shapes of these towering giraffes to evoke a feeling of a strange, untamed world.

Courtesy Plastics and Coal Chemicals Division, Allied Chemical Corp.

In this picture by Albert Dorne we cannot help but feel the mad terror and the thundering, irresistible force of the stampeding elephant herd.

FRED LUDEKENS

Courtesy True Magazine

HAROLD VON SCHMIDT

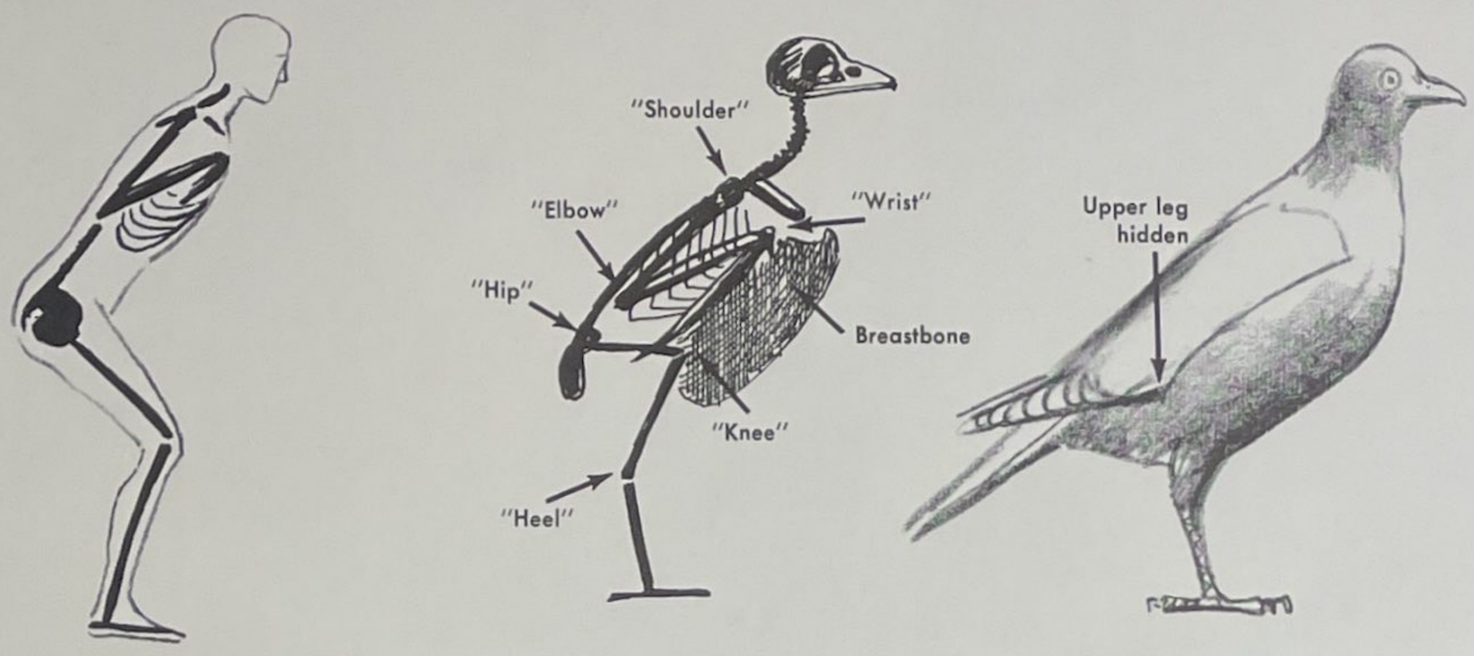
© The Curtis Publishing Co.

Birds offer magnificent material for the artist. By thoroughly exploiting their unique characteristics of movement and design you can create pictures that are striking compositions and produce a direct emotional response. The two examples on this page show how this can be done.

The California quail in the painting by Fred Ludekens were studied from life on a California ranch. They convey a sense of unruffled and purposeful flight from danger. Notice, too, how carefully Ludekens has controlled them from the viewpoint of design and composition. The five birds have been arranged in an irregular ring around the hunter, who, despite his small size, cannot be overlooked. The markings on the birds are both convincing and decorative.

Harold Von Schmidt has given his swans a quality of grace and poetry which it would be very difficult to capture in a photograph. All the same, there is great authenticity to the details of form, texture, and movement.

When you paint birds or animals, think of them as having almost human strengths and weaknesses and strive to capture these qualities in your pictures. It will give them greater expressiveness and meaning.



Man and bird are surprisingly alike in their skeleton structure.

The bird

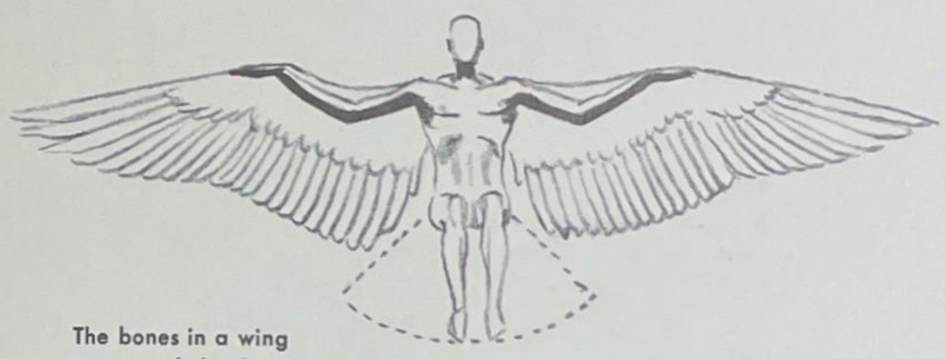
The bird, with its feathery coat and gift of flight, seems a far different creature from man. Yet, although it is not as much like him as the four-footed animals are, it has many of the same parts that he does.

Take the bird's wings, for example. In their bony structure they are quite similar to our arms. If you will put your hand to your upper chest and bend your wrist down, as in the figure above, the bones in your arm will actually be in the same position as the bones in the folded wing. Or try holding your arms out, as in the winged figure at the right. Now you can see even more easily how your arm bones correspond to the bones of the wing.

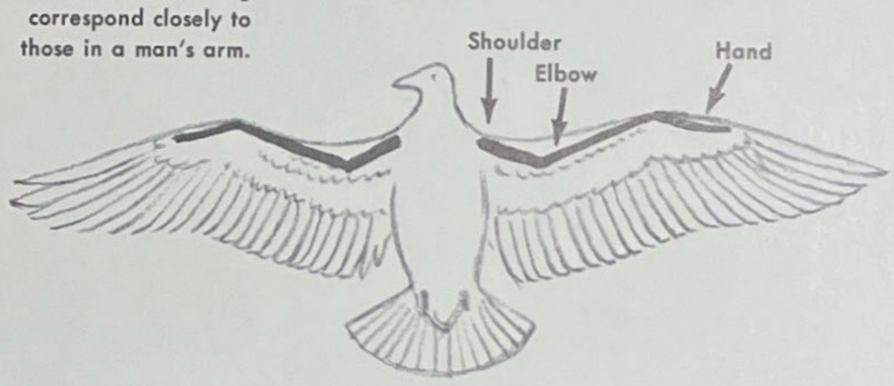
Like a man's legs, the legs of a bird have a "hip," "knee," and "heel." However, the bird is closer to most of the four-footed animals in its posture: it stands on its toes with its heel up from the ground.

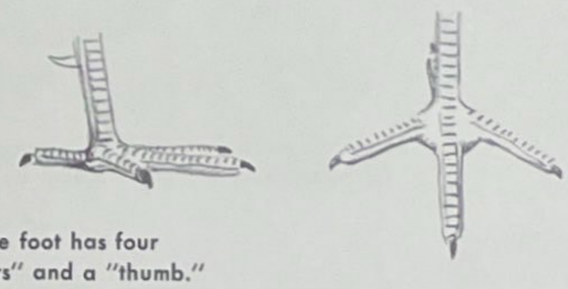
Carefully examine the bird's skeleton above and you will see where the wing joins at the shoulder and where the leg joins at the hip. This latter point is difficult to observe on the living bird because the feathers cover the upper leg from hip to knee, so that the leg appears to start at the knee. The bird has a large breastbone, shaped somewhat like the keel of a boat, to which its well-developed flight muscles are attached.

Although different species vary in their proportions, you can still use basic forms to draw the birds. These forms can be changed and adapted to fit whatever type of bird you draw.

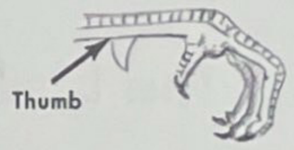


The bones in a wing correspond closely to those in a man's arm.

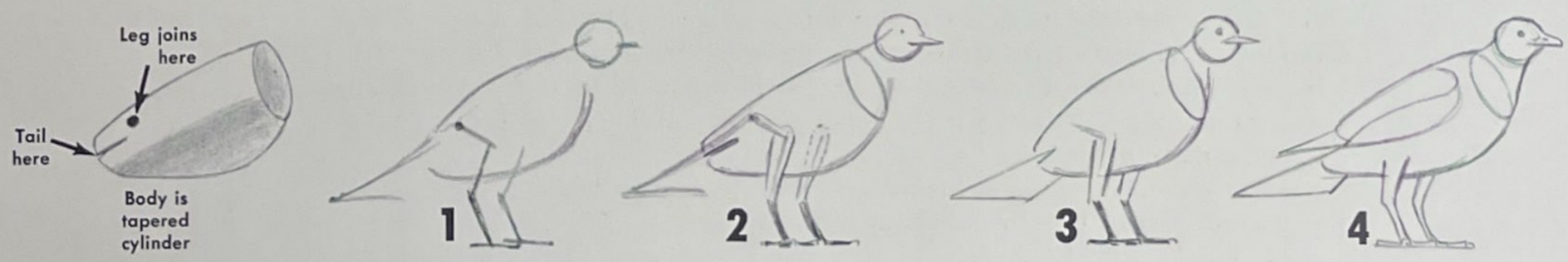




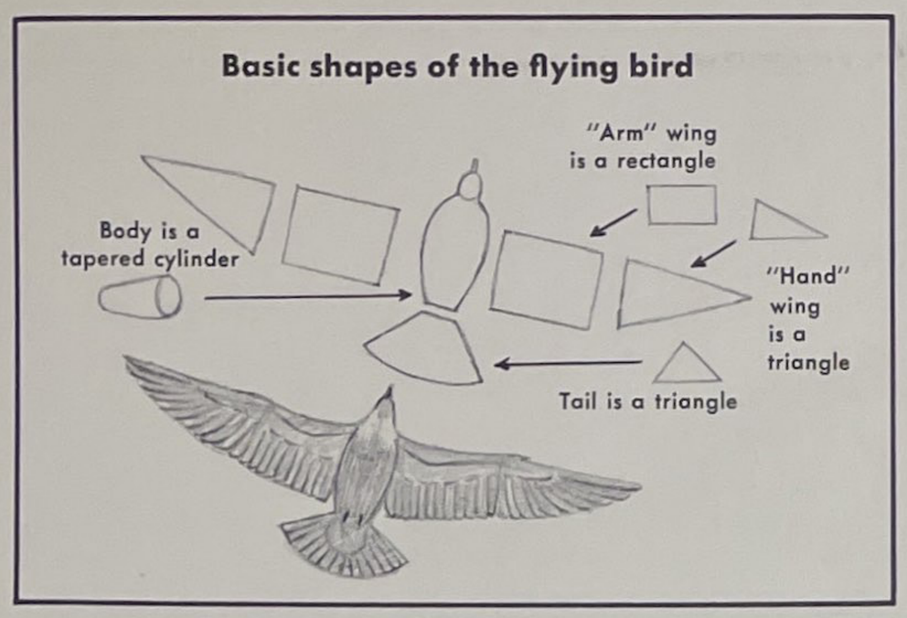
The foot has four "fingers" and a "thumb."

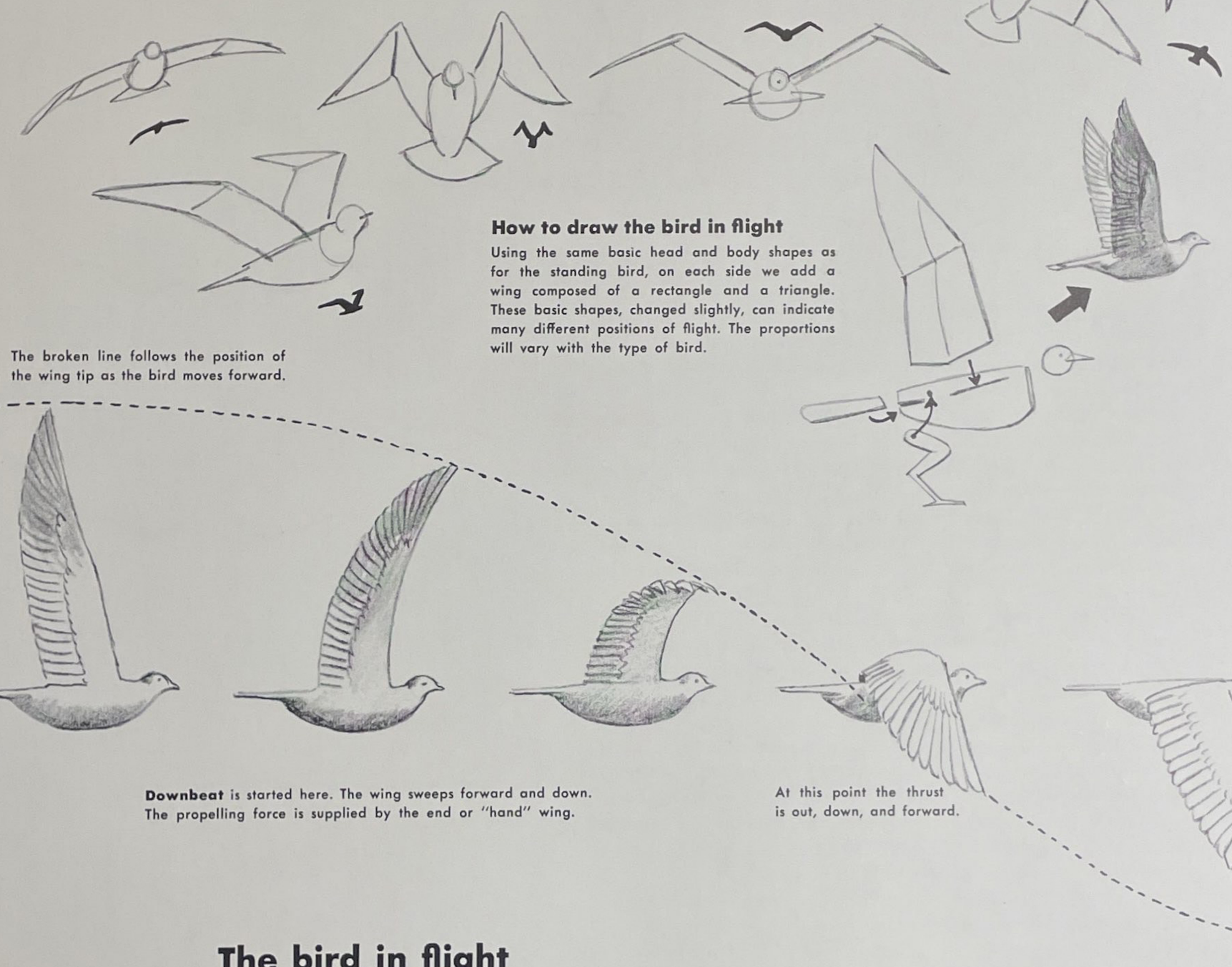


How to draw the standing bird



First sketch the general position and shape, then build the simple basic forms as shown. Note the tapered cylinder of the body bulging at the chest.


Basic shapes of the flying bird
"Arm" wing is a rectangle
Body is a tapered cylinder
"Hand" wing is a triangle
Tail is a triangle



How to draw the bird in flight

Using the same basic head and body shapes as for the standing bird, on each side we add a wing composed of a rectangle and a triangle. These basic shapes, changed slightly, can indicate many different positions of flight. The proportions will vary with the type of bird.

The broken line follows the position of the wing tip as the bird moves forward.

Downbeat is started here. The wing sweeps forward and down. The propelling force is supplied by the end or "hand" wing.

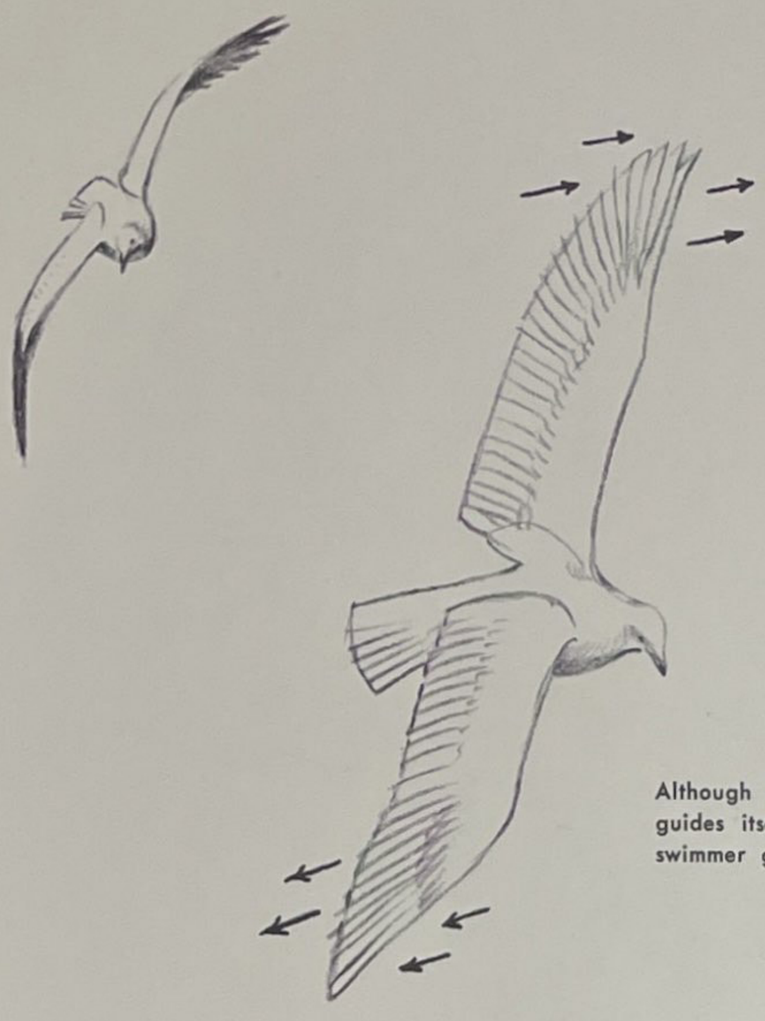
At this point the thrust is out, down, and forward.

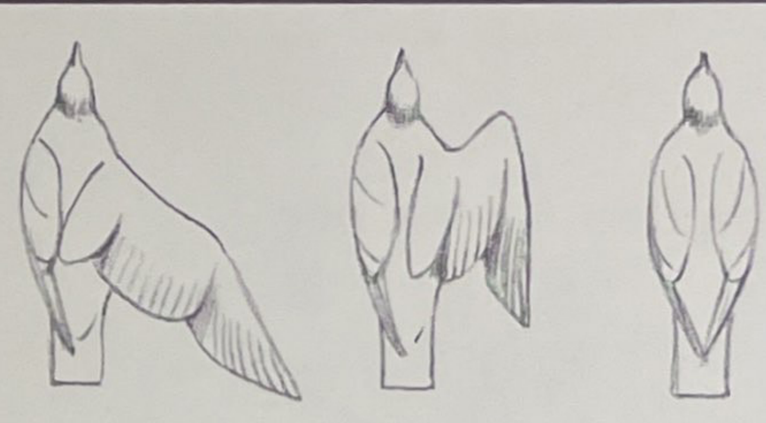
The bird in flight

The basic flying action for all birds is the same. The wing moves forward and down, then back and up, the way your arm does when you swim the crawl stroke. With its feathers closed, the wing "bites" into the air just as your hand does in the water when the fingers are closed. At the end of your stroke you turn your hand and raise it through the water to minimize resistance. The bird does a similar thing – at the end of the stroke it lifts the wing and separates and turns the feathers, allowing the air to slip through. The bird gains its lift or flight-sustaining force by creating a vacuum over the top of the wing, causing the air pressure below to thrust it upward.

Although all birds fly in much the same way, there are differences in the details of the movements. The tiny humming bird, for example, beats its wings as rapidly as two hundred times a second, while the long-winged pelican beats them only one or two times a second.

In flight the legs extend straight back. The tail is in a relaxed, horizontal position except when brought into use to help control the direction of flight.





How a bird folds its wings

The wing is moved back and up at the start of the action. Each outer section fits under the next section going toward the body.

Although the tail is also used, the bird guides itself mostly with its wings as a swimmer guides himself with his arms.

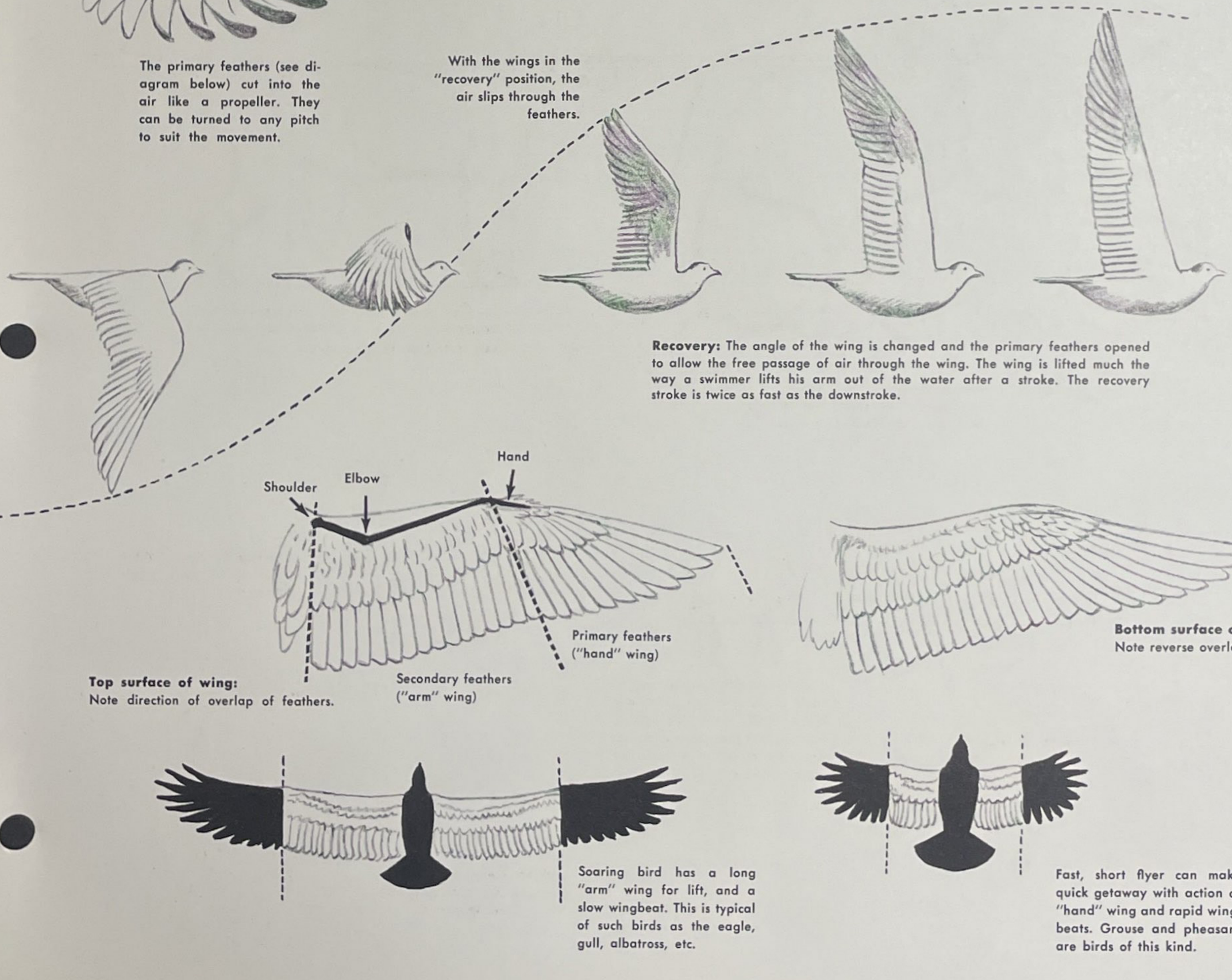
Landing

Climbing

The tail can change shape and be used to control direction, to slow the bird, or to help it go up or down. The tail can also be twisted for a turn or banking movement.

The primary feathers (see diagram below) cut into the air like a propeller. They can be turned to any pitch to suit the movement.

With the wings in the "recovery" position, the air slips through the feathers.



Recovery: The angle of the wing is changed and the primary feathers opened to allow the free passage of air through the wing. The wing is lifted much the way a swimmer lifts his arm out of the water after a stroke. The recovery stroke is twice as fast as the downstroke.

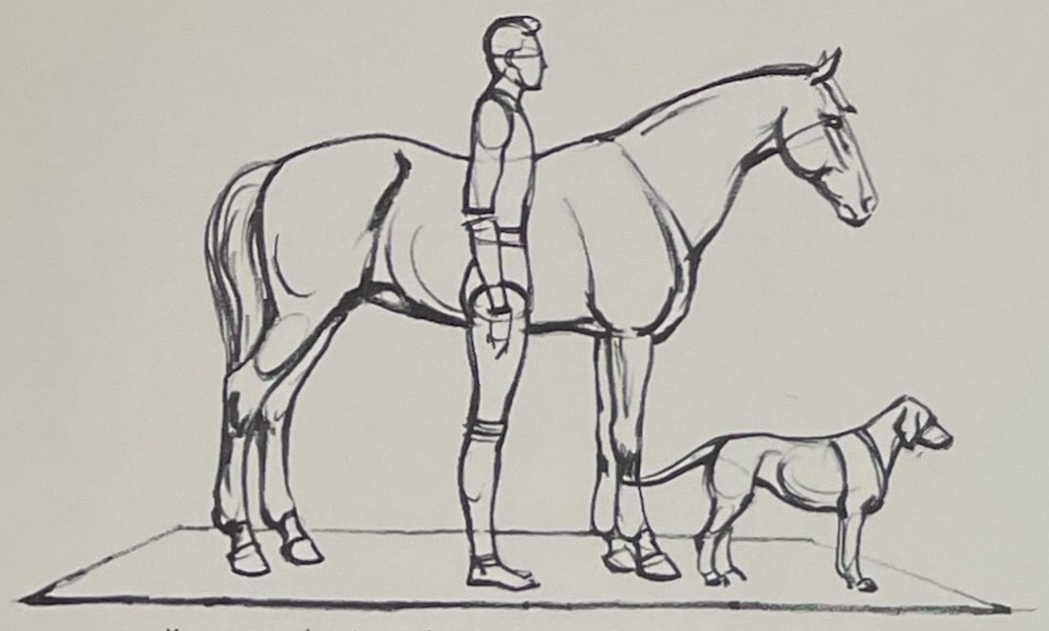
Top surface of wing:
Note direction of overlap of feathers.

Bottom surface of wing:
Note reverse overlap of feathers.

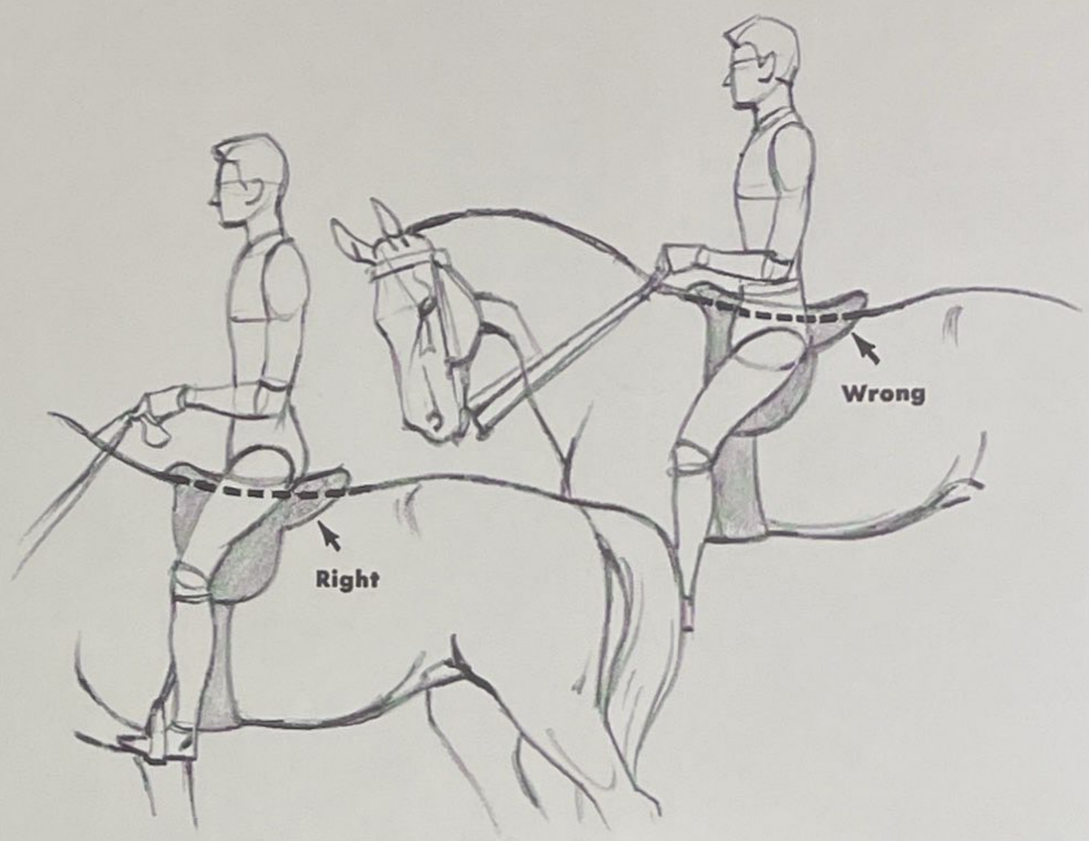
Soaring bird has a long "arm" wing for lift, and a slow wingbeat. This is typical of such birds as the eagle, gull, albatross, etc.

Fast, short flyer can make quick getaway with action of "hand" wing and rapid wingbeats. Grouse and pheasant are birds of this kind.

Things to remember



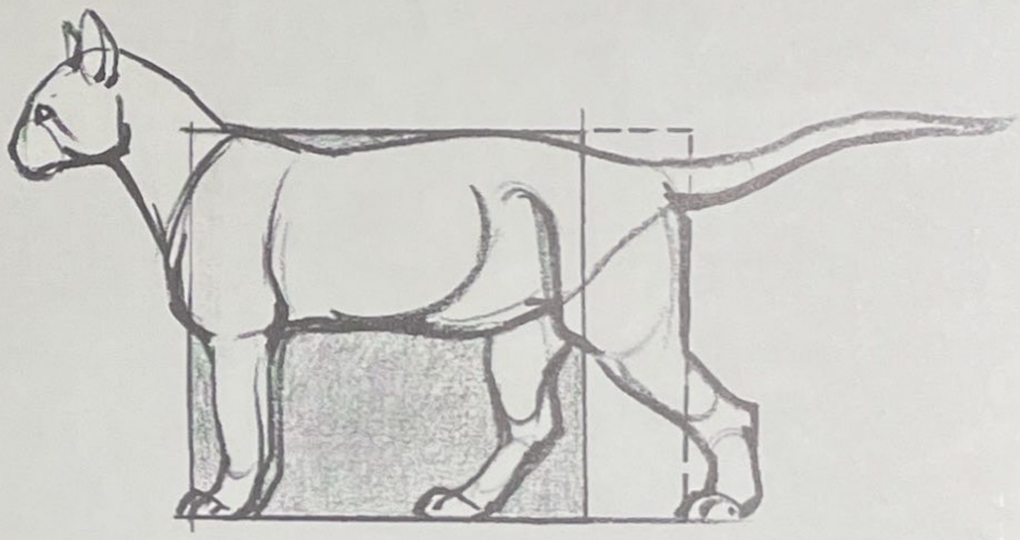
Keep your drawings of animals <u>in scale.</u> Although animals of the same species do vary in size, the comparative size of each species remains constant. When drawing a man alongside a horse, don't make him a giant or a pigmy — unless he is one.



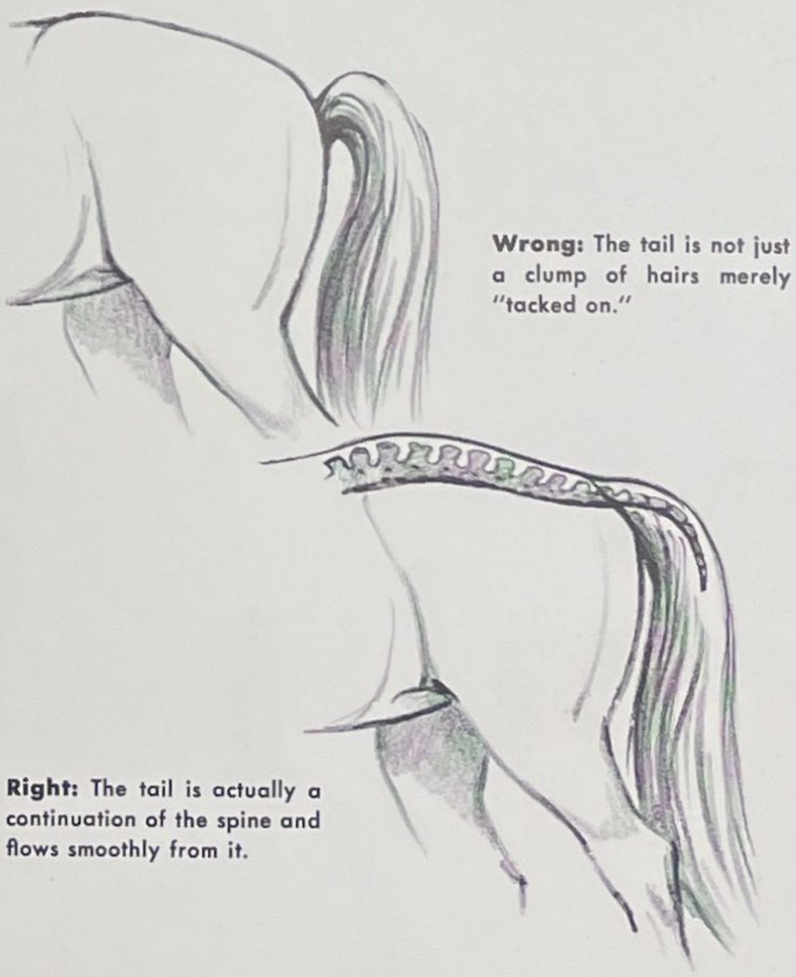
Draw the rider so that he rests <u>on</u> the saddle, not <u>in</u> the horse. "Draw through" the horse's back and saddle to get the placement right.

Wrong: Don't draw the cat's back too short and straight. This makes the animal look more like a dog rather than a cat.

Right: The cat's body is <u>long</u> (see diagram at right) and its back arches decidedly in a seated position such as this one.

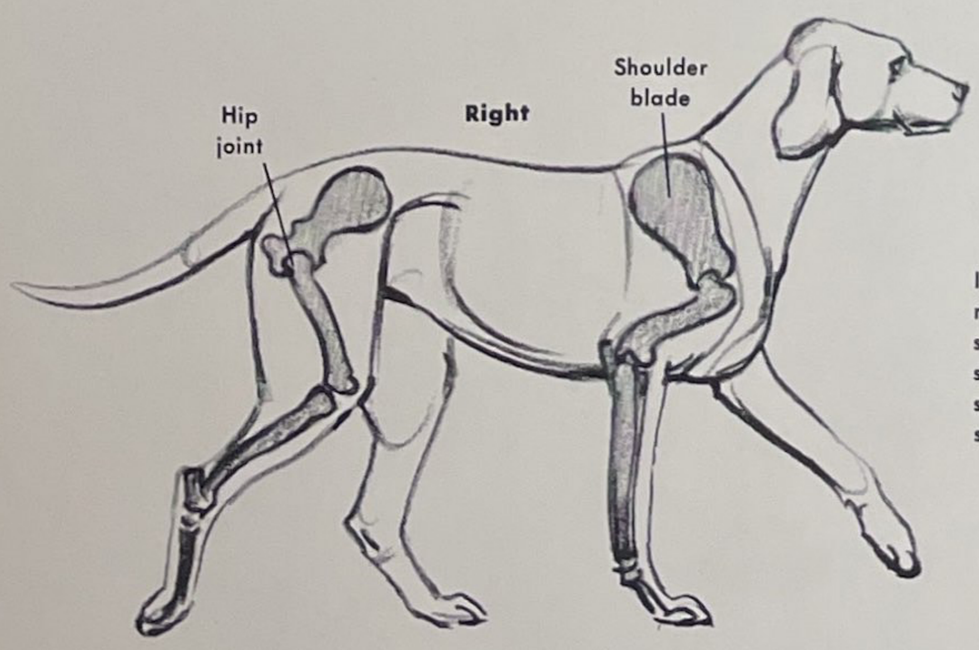


The cat's body is quite long in comparison to its height. Unlike the body of the average horse and dog, it does not fit into a square.

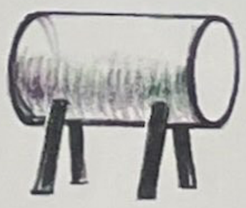


Wrong: The tail is not just a clump of hairs merely "tacked on."

Right: The tail is actually a continuation of the spine and flows smoothly from it.



Wrong



In all four-legged animals, the leg motion starts at the hip joint and shoulder blade, where the body is supported. An animal's legs do not stop at the bottom of its body like supports under a barrel.

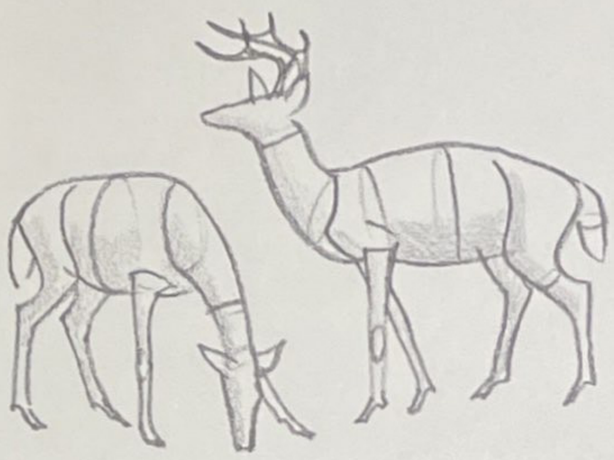
Animals in pictures

Animals have long been one of the favorite subjects of many of our best artists – each of whom drew or painted them in his own manner and interpreted them in his own personal way.

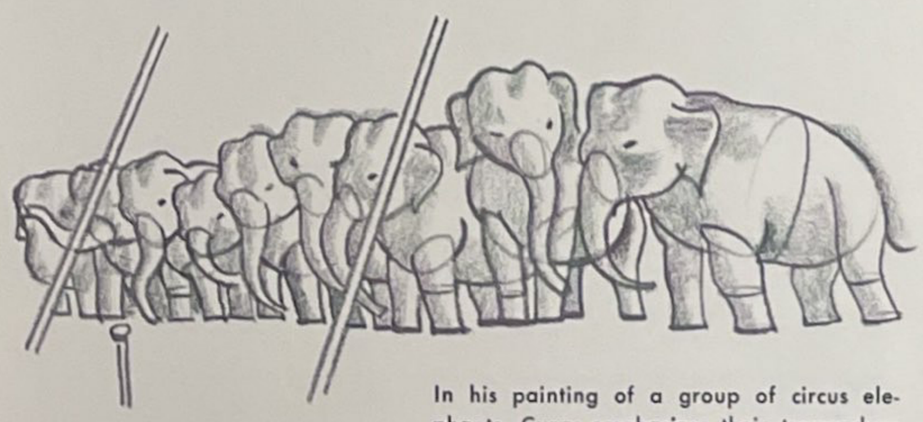
For example, El Greco's animals have a real air of nobility that makes them fit perfectly into his majestic compositions. Landseer, a great animal lover himself, took a sentimental approach to his subject, while Audubon was chiefly concerned with drawing an accurate record of what a particular species of bird or animal looked like in its natural habitat – a record that would stand up under the critical eye of naturalists. Rousseau, a mystical, primitive painter, endowed the animals and birds of his strange dream worlds with an eerie quality that heightens our response to his work.

As you study the paintings on these pages, notice that each artist has designed his picture to bring out the characteristics of each animal – its action, form, shape or texture. Whatever seemed important to the artist has been emphasized by careful picture planning.

John James Audubon – Virginia Deer

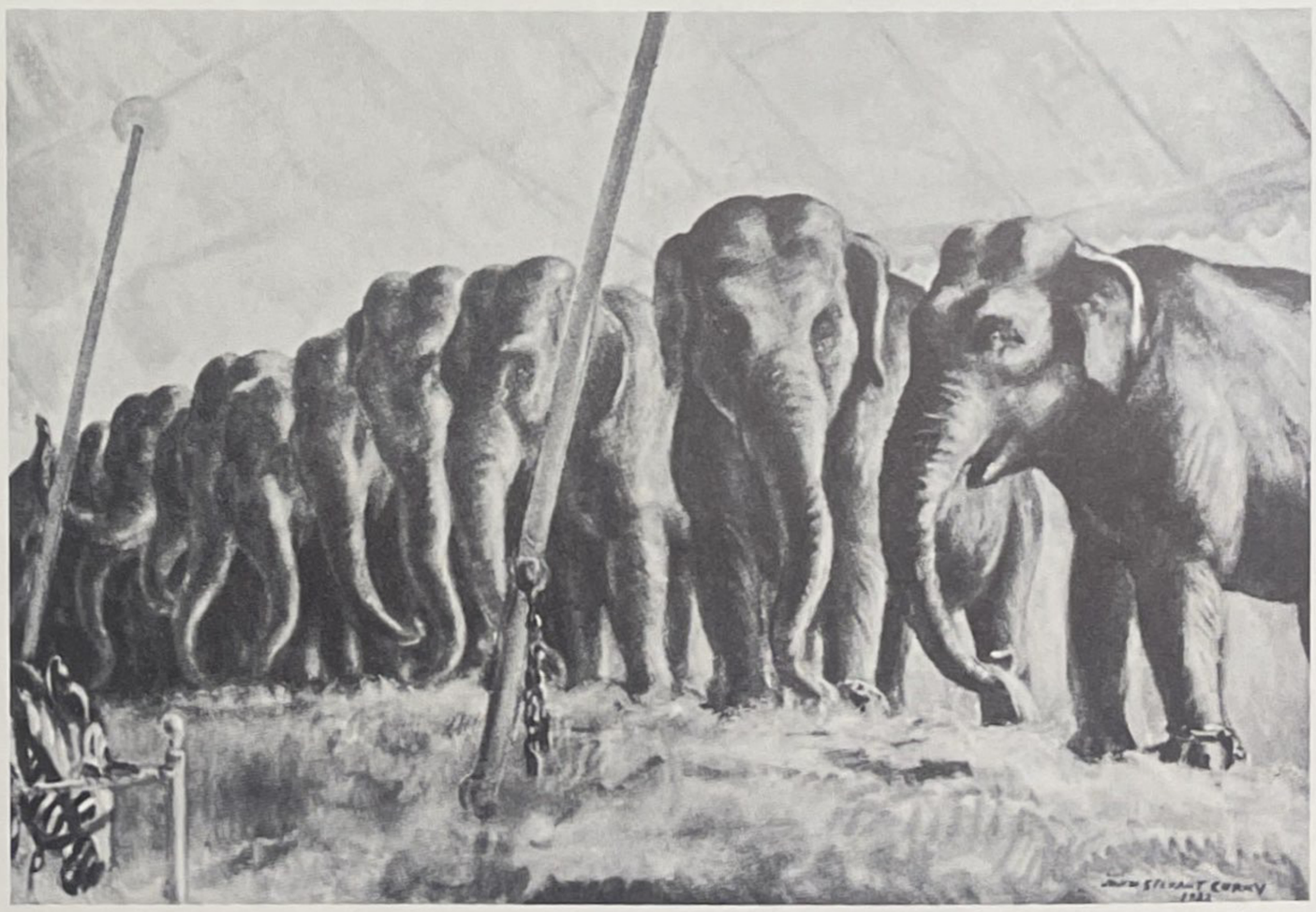


Audubon's superb handling of the texture and details of his birds or animals was always accompanied by sound, firsthand observation of their form and action. Here he conveys the characteristic attitudes of the deer – one animal alert and on guard as the other drinks. This choice of action gives authenticity and realism to his work, as well as strength of design.



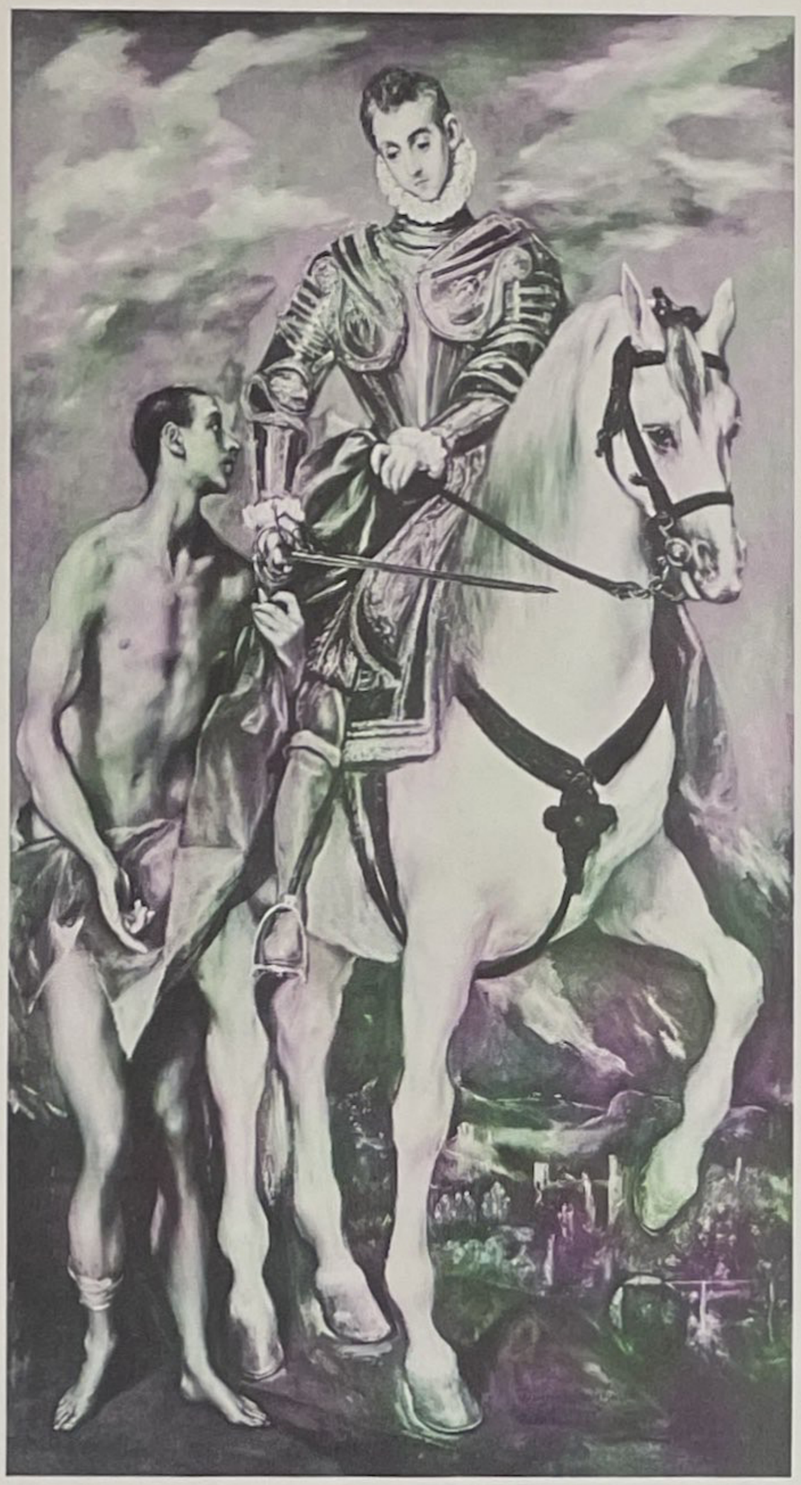
In his painting of a group of circus elephants, Curry emphasizes their tremendous bulk and weight by contrasting them with the light, thin tent poles. Although we see almost all of these animals from the front, the over-all design is kept varied and interesting by the different positions of the trunks and the change of size due to perspective.

John Steuart Curry – Circus Elephants



El Greco — St. Martin and the Beggar

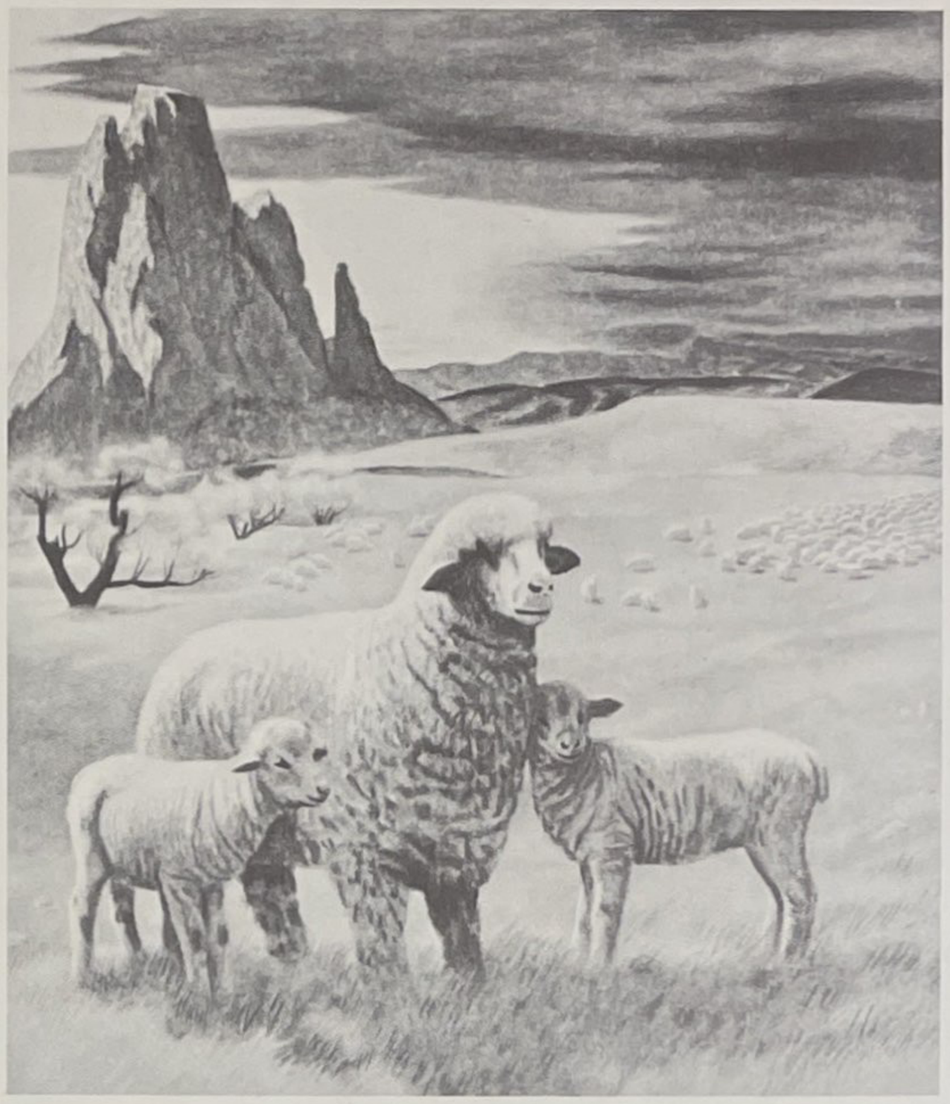
Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C., Widener Collection



Elongated forms and sinuous contours are characteristics of El Greco's highly personal and emotional style of painting. In this picture the artist has made the horse taller and more slender than normal — consistent with the way he has treated the thin form of the beggar.

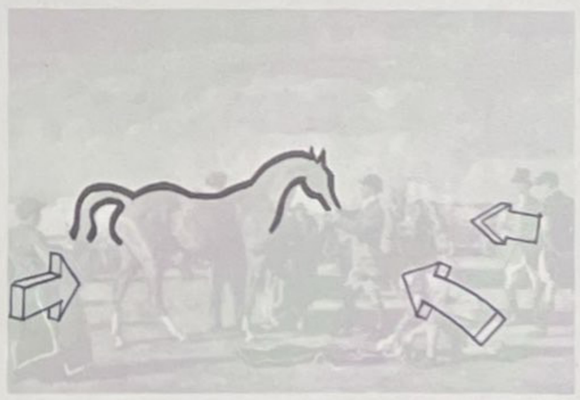
John Atherton

Courtesy Dow Chemical Company



This picture is a fine example of thoughtful use of lines and shapes to accentuate and bring out the center of interest. Atherton has made these sheep appear softer and fleecier by contrasting their rounded forms and outlines with the hard, sharp edges of the large rock in the background. Notice that he has even made the clouds jagged and angular in shape to add to the contrast.

Sir Alfred Munnings — The Red Prince Mare



Alfred Munnings was one of England's best and most respected painters of sporting horses. In this picture, see how he has carefully placed the characteristic shapes of the horse — the head, curved back and tail — against the light sky, to make the animal the center of interest. He has also arranged the figures around it so they lead our eye in toward the animal and give it further emphasis.

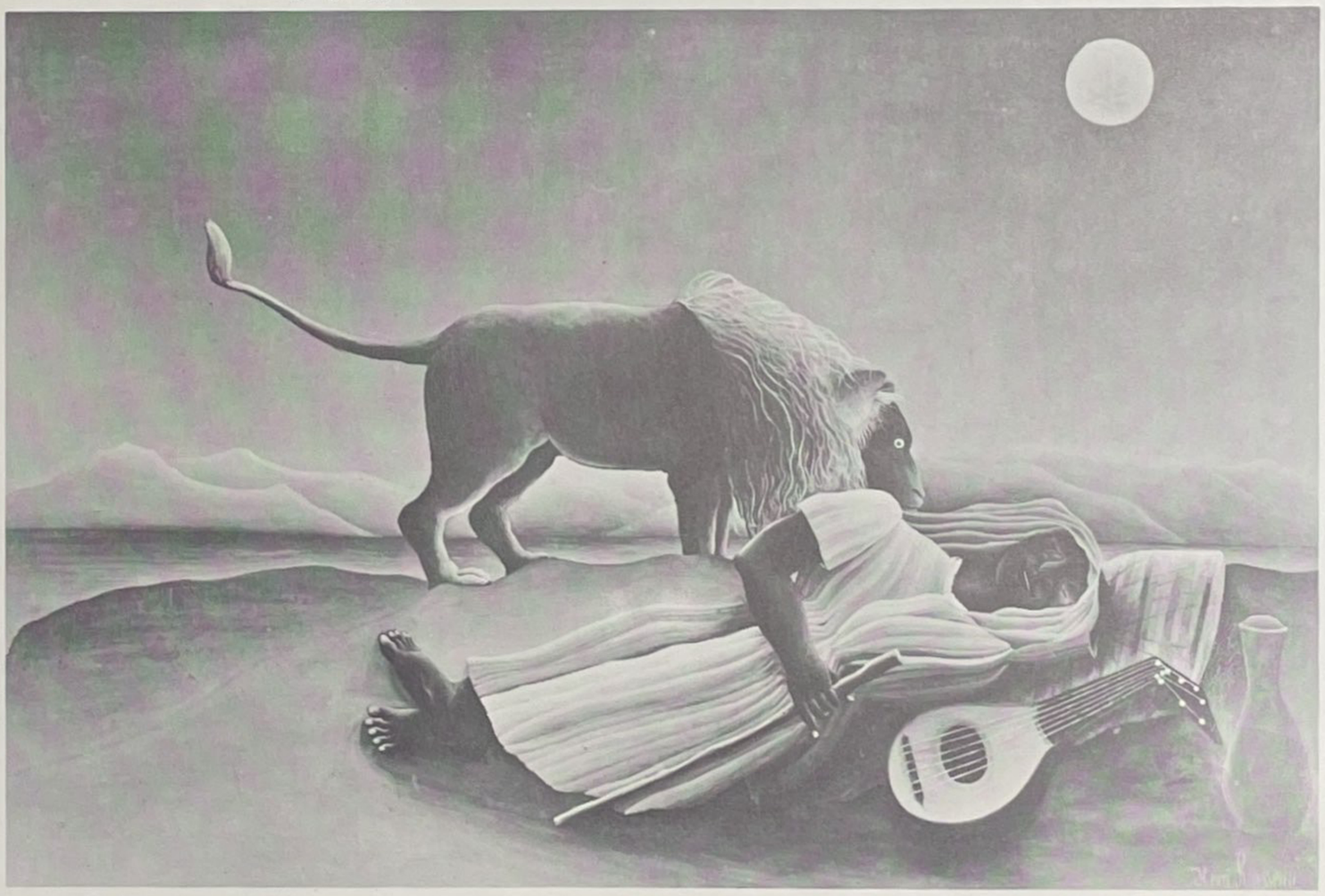
Sir Edwin Landseer — Shoeing the Bay Mare
Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the Tate Gallery, London

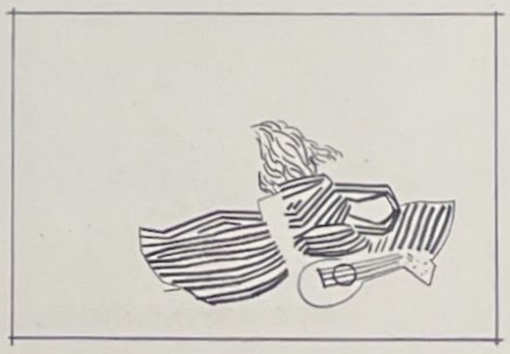
Landseer, a famous nineteenth-century English artist, loved animals and knew them thoroughly. His work always shows a strong sense of design. Here, for example, he has placed his subjects — horse, mule and dog, as well as the blacksmith — to form a somewhat circular composition. The horse dominates the scene — the curving line of its back and neck holds the composition together and starts our eye off in a counterclockwise movement.

Winslow Homer — The Fox Hunt Courtesy The Pennsylvania Academy of The Fine Arts

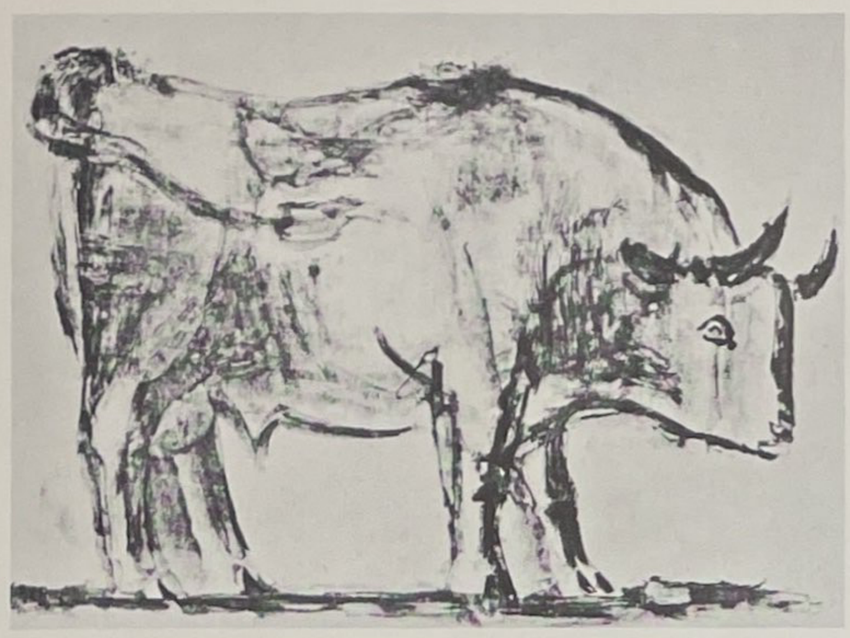
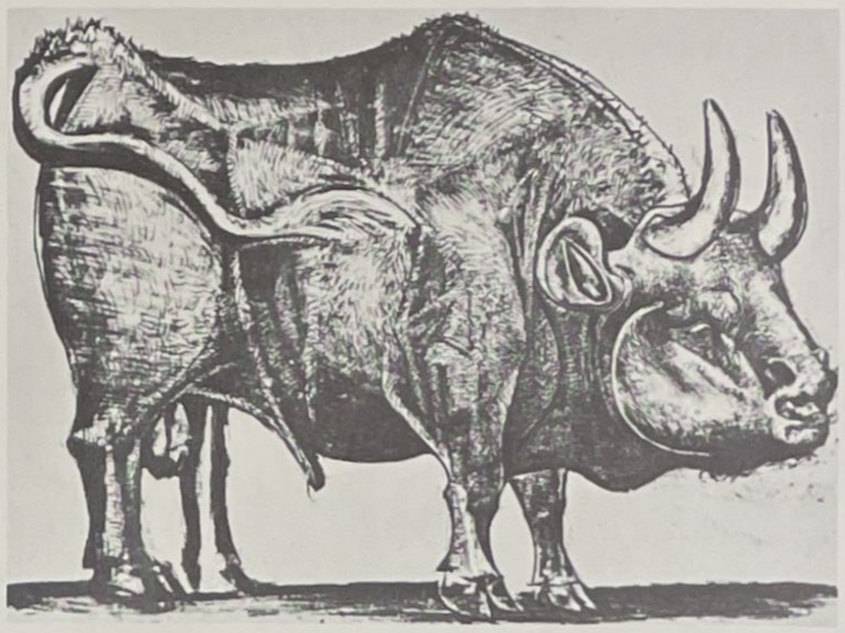
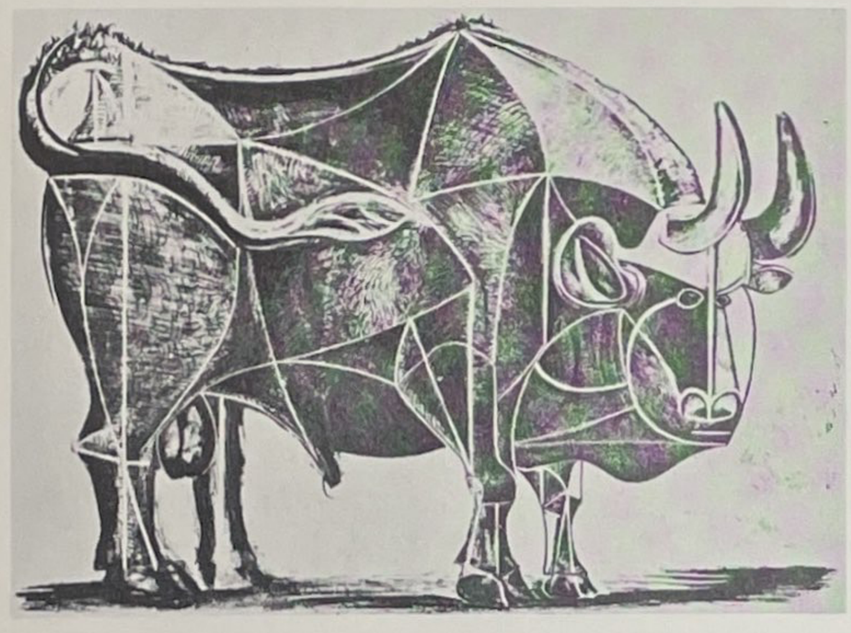
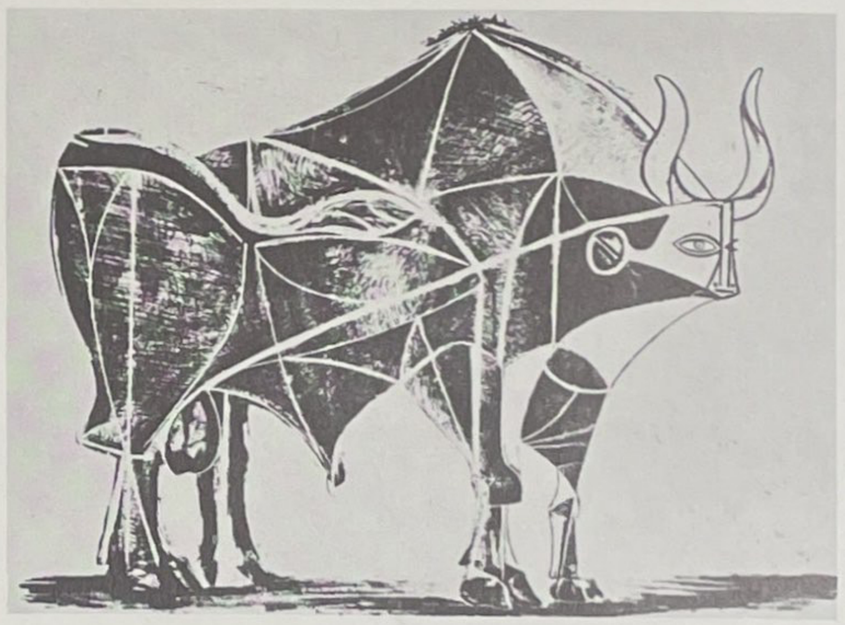
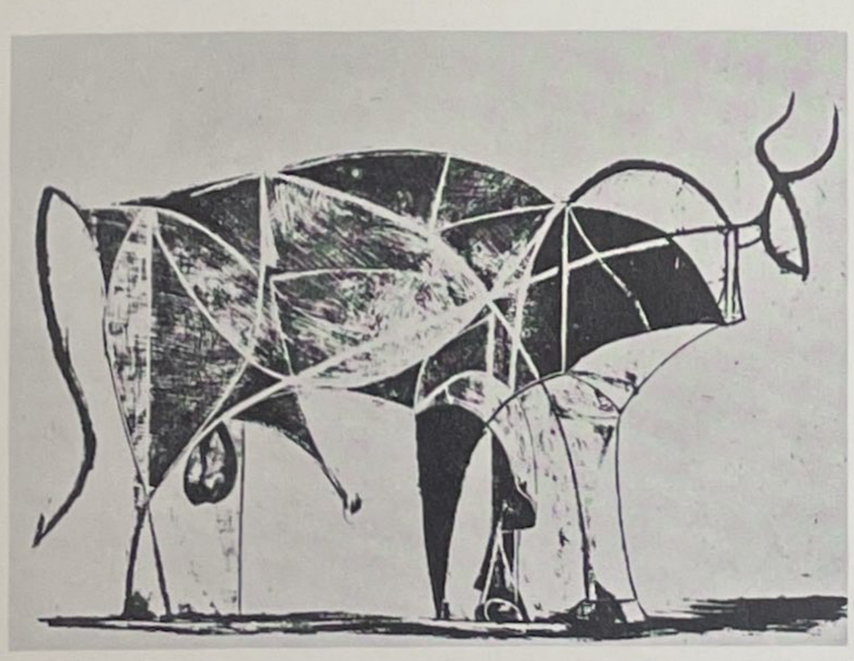
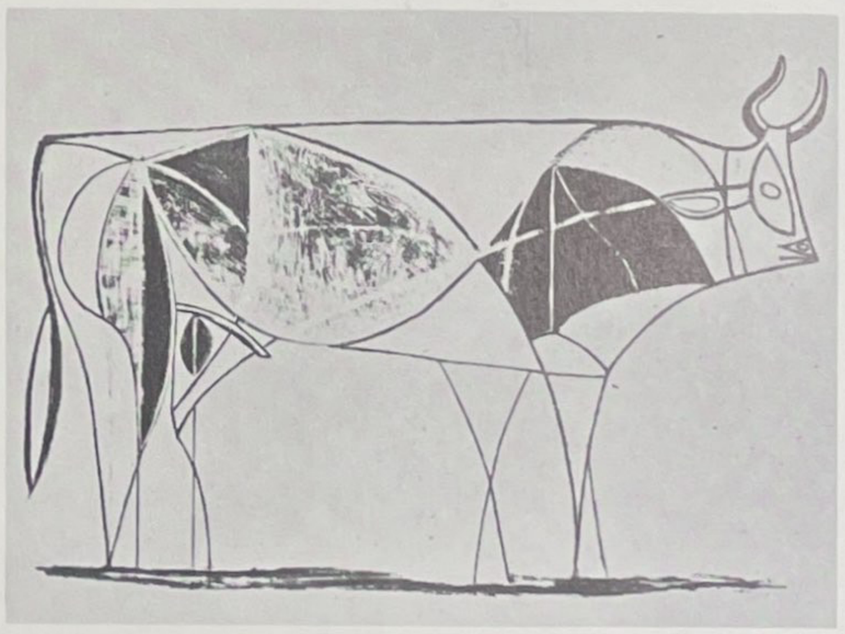
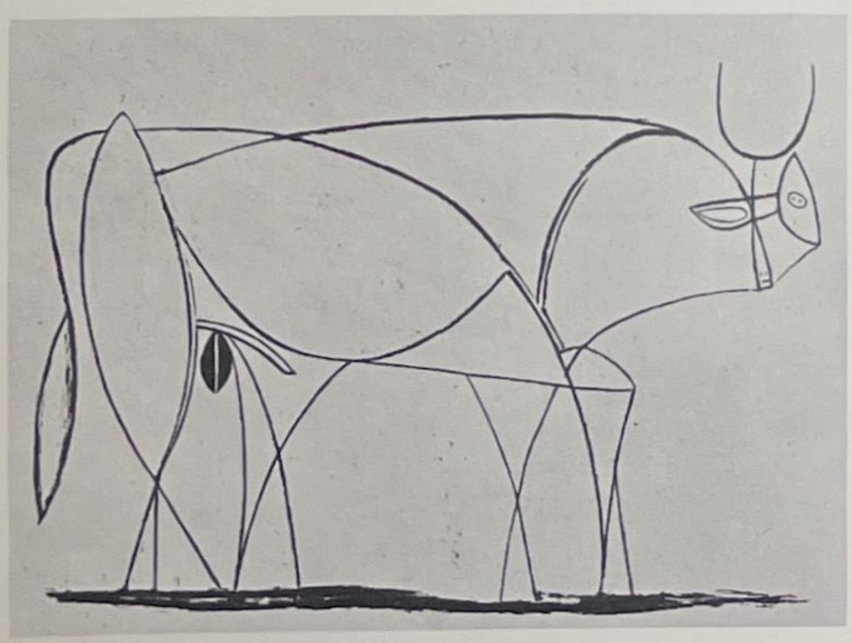
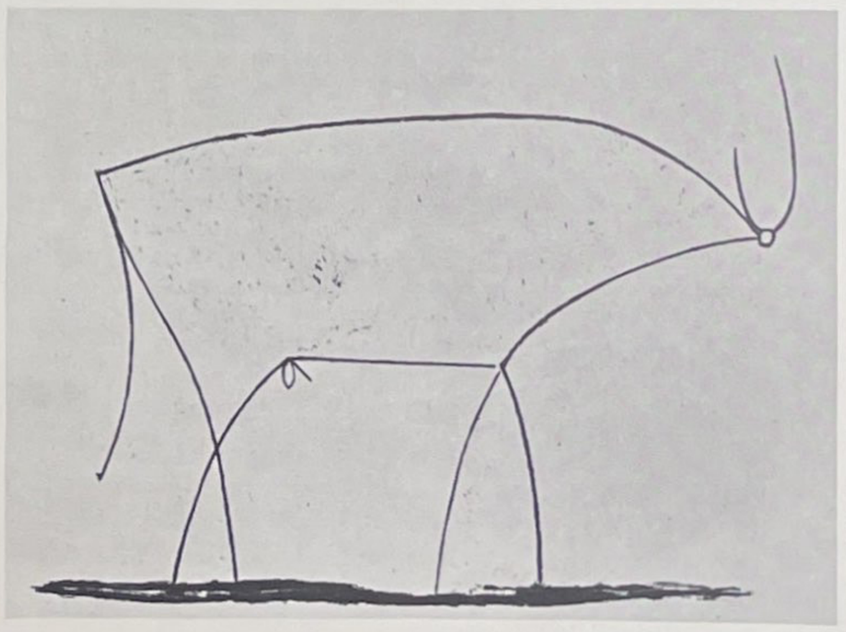
This striking picture by Winslow Homer is a fine example of keen observation of animal life. While living in Maine, Homer sometimes saw a fox, caught in a field of deep snow, attacked by flocks of hungry crows, and this provided his subject. The great expanse of white snow which serves to isolate the fox also gives the picture beautiful simplicity. The silhouettes of the fox and the hovering crows were carefully drawn to show their characteristic features. With nothing but the sea in the background, all of our attention is centered on the battle between birds and beast.

Henri Rousseau — The Sleeping Gypsy Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York





In this wondrously imaginative picture, Rousseau confines all of the busy textures and patterns to the area shown in the diagram. The rest of the picture is made up of smooth, quiet tones that suggest the stillness of the night. Against this quiet setting, contrasting textures like the lion's mane and the striped robe stand out very sharply and draw our eye compellingly to the strange, exotic figures.

Approach your subject creatively

This series of pictures shows eight different approaches to the same subject by one of the world's most versatile and creative artists. It demonstrates Picasso's complete control over his subject and his ability to see it and draw it in many varied ways, ranging from realistic to highly abstract. Our main purpose in showing you these different approaches by one artist is to point out the vast possibilities for original and interesting concepts in your drawing and painting of animals. You may not wish to carry your work to extreme degrees of abstraction, but be willing to experiment, to try new, creative ways of expression – you'll find it stimulating and rewarding.